THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
GEORGE BANCROFT

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OF
GEORGE BANCROFT

BY

M. A. DEWOLFE HOWE

ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME II

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1908

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Published April, 1908

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GEORGE BANCROFT ABOUT 1854 . . *Frontispiece*
From the crayon portrait by Samuel Laurence in the Worcester Art Museum.

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Probably taken at Brady's National Gallery, New York, after her return from England. From a picture owned by Miss Elizabeth B. Bliss.

GEORGE BANCROFT IN OLD AGE 288
From a photograph taken in his study in Washington.

VI

MINISTER TO ENGLAND

1846–1849

For the period of Bancroft's service in the English mission his correspondence supplies an abundant record of his political, social and scholarly activities. To publish all of it would be to produce a separate volume. Such a book has already been made from the letters of Mrs. Bancroft to her family,[1] and they present so complete a picture of the social life to which Bancroft's official and personal position opened the doors that the preponderance of other interests in his own letters need occasion no regret. The purpose of the present chapter will best be served by presenting in chronological order such selections from the letters as seem to possess the greatest intrinsic importance and interest. Quite distinct from the letters he wrote from London to political and personal friends in America are those from Paris to Mrs. Bancroft, which shall form the second section of this chapter.

Bancroft's staunch belief in the superiority of the

[1] *Letters from England*, 1846–1849. By Elizabeth Davis Bancroft (Mrs. George Bancroft). Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1904.

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republican institutions of his native land over those of all monarchical governments need only be mentioned to prepare the reader for many expressions of it. In the diplomatic service of his country and the Polk administration his efforts were directed chiefly to modifying the existing postal relations between Great Britain and the United States, and the laws touching commerce and navigation. He saw the first of these negotiations brought to a successful close during his mission to England. His disappointment at leaving the second as unfinished business is manifest in some of the later letters from London. The letters relating to both of these subjects are numerous and explicit, but, naturally, of slight biographical value.

I

LETTERS FROM LONDON

On the 25th of October, 1846, Bancroft and his wife landed at Liverpool after a stormy passage of more than sixteen days on the *Great Western*. The first of Mrs. Bancroft's published letters describes the extreme discomforts of the voyage. By the 1st of November the travellers found themselves in London, and early in the month their household was comfortably established at 90 Eaton Square.

To PRESIDENT POLK.

"LONDON, *November* 3, 1846.

"I shall send you but a short letter today. Our passage across the Atlantic was favourable as to winds,

but exceedingly boisterous. Mrs. Bancroft suffered during the whole voyage, and was so much weakened and emaciated, that I was obliged to remain (what in itself was very desirable) four days in Liverpool. Nothing can exceed the interest taken there in the change in the British and American tariffs. They hung upon me as an oracle to hear how much Indian corn the valley of the Mississippi can produce. The consumption of that article is increasing with unexpected rapidity, and it was more eagerly inquired after than wheat and flour. I wish you would have some statement sent me of the actual and *possible* product of Indian corn for export from the United States. Mr. Walker,[1] I am sure will do it. . . .

"From the continent, no doubt you have received full accounts of the doings of Louis Philippe and Spanish Queens and Infantas. Lord Palmerston is angry: the *entente cordiale* is broken up; the dead body of the Treaty of Utrecht is dug up to frighten fools with; and even the fools laugh at the imposition. The serious part for us is, that at the meeting of Victoria and L. Philippe at the castle of Ere, the marriage of Montpensier and the Infanta was spoken of. To conciliate England to this personal object the King of the French meddled with Texas; and now having failed in Texas, to the general satisfaction of the French, he is met by England with a protest against the intermarriage between his family and the royal family of Spain. The breach is the wider because Louis Philippe and Guizot are openly charged with bad faith; but Eng-

[1] Secretary of the Treasury under Polk.

land will rest content with a harmless protest, and the communication of the papers to Parliament. . . .

"Best regards to Mrs. Polk. I see Lord Palmerston [1] today at 5, and dine in his company at 7. So soon as I see the Queen I shall write to the Ruler of the White House.[2] . . . "

To PRESIDENT POLK.

"LONDON, *December* 3, 1846.

". . . The steamer comes without a scrap of a letter from Washington. The news from New York has astonished us.[3] The hour of adversity is the hour of dignity. I do not doubt you contemplate with calmness the changes and heavings to and fro of public opinion. The *Morning Chronicle* of today contains a summons to the Whig party of the North to oppose the annexation of California. Up to this time the English people and Government have looked upon it as a matter of course, that California was to come to us. If the whigs come to their aid, they may wish a different issue. I regret the issue of the election as encouraging Mexico to persevere in opposition. Your old idea of a line to be declared and maintained may come to be the best: if Mexico by delay, seeks to weary us into retreat, let America use the same policy: shut

[1] At this time Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

[2] In a letter of November 8th, Lord Palmerston wrote to Bancroft: "I forgot to mention to you yesterday that at Windsor we wear in the evening tight Pantaloons or Shorts, and not loose Trowzers."

[3] The defeat of Gov. Silas Wright, of New York, as a candidate for re-election.

up the anarchists within narrow limits, keep up the blockade and abide the issue. The wishes of Europe have thus far been with us. Men hope to see Mexico regenerated through us.

"I grieve very much for the defeat of Mr. Wright. If he could be persuaded to come abroad I should feel it a duty to step aside for him, if that would be agreeable to him."

To PRESIDENT POLK.

"LONDON, *January* 4, 1847.

"I was a little disappointed at not receiving a private letter from anybody at Washington. But I can well understand the imperative demands upon your time at the opening of Congress. Many thanks for your message which is both clearly and vigorously written. The comments upon it in many of the English papers spring from their consciousness of your success and of their own inability to interfere. It was a hard lesson for England to learn, but she has learned it, that America means to go on her own way, and that Europe, though it might gaze with envy, must give up the thought of swaying her destiny. . . .

"The news from America has been looked forward to with intense avidity. When the message came, they found it unanswerable. They saw that the Californias would certainly become ours, and they set up a savage, incoherent growl. The growl was the more fierce, because they intend only to be *lookers on*. The affairs of Ireland are much worse for them than you can con-

ceive. I had no idea of the difficulties of a settlement of the questions that arise there, till I came to have the opportunity of near observation. The result must in the end be, enlarged and radical concessions to Ireland, at the expense of the Anglo-Irish church, and to the repression of the Anglo-Irish landlords; and those concessions will not be made, till the crisis becomes more imminent.

"Then too Lord Palmerston has broken with Guizot and Louis Philippe, and does, by no means, carry the English Public along with him. Guizot and Louis P. are on this occasion firm. It was the court which led to this mistake of the English ministry. The queen Victoria has herself addressed a letter to the queen of the French, and another to the queen of the Belgians, mildly written, it is said, but still expressing her dissatisfaction. That discontent is not shared by the British people. On the other hand, Guizot has written to Lord John Russell[1] a letter, insinuating that it would be better to have a more peace-loving man than Lord Palmerston to manage English foreign affairs. Lord John of course showed the letter to Palmerston, and this did not improve the friendly relations of the antagonist diplomatists. Afterwards Count Jarnac[2] presented a paper to Lord Palmerston, and reported to Lord John Russell, that the paper had been received without attention by Lord Palmerston. On the other hand Lord Palmerston avers that in a conversation of two hours he went over the despatch with Count

[1] At this time First Lord of the Treasury and Premier.
[2] Of the French Embassy at London.

Jarnac point by point. Of course here were new causes of anger. . . ."

To President Polk.

"London, *January* 19, 1847.

"Although there is no regular steam packet, I cannot but write a line to you today, as a vessel with a propeller is to sail from Liverpool tomorrow.

"Public affairs remain as I last reported them to you. Ireland becomes the all-absorbing topic. The evils of abject poverty and well-grounded discontent are heightened by famine; and the ministry, and the British public, and the opposition, and most of all, Ireland itself, knows not what to propose. All thought of troubling France about the Montpensier marriage is renounced openly by almost all. Louis Philippe has had a signal triumph, though at the expense of the *entente cordiale*. The attempts from this side the channel to overthrow Guizot, have ended in renewing his strength; and the English are chagrined to find, that their own minister has not the best of the argument, and that the English despatches are inferior to the French in dignity and fairness. Lord Palmerston is a good deal worried; and is not, I think, sustained by public opinion here.

"Towards the United States the feeling is such as I have heretofore described to you. They do not love us; but they are compelled to respect us. In the *Times* of the 18th you will see one of my despatches as Secretary of the Navy cut up, though my name is omitted. But it all amounts to nothing. England sees that the

Californias must be ours; and sees it with unmingled regret, but remains 'neutral.' You may rely on my conducting myself with circumspection; and, what is of more importance, you may rely, I think, that the embarrassments of domestic affairs here, will forbid all British or French interference in Mexican affairs. . . .

"By the *Cambria* I received my new commission with the sanction of the Senate. Let me express to you my thanks that you at once sent in my nomination, and settled the whole affair so promptly. I feel greatly obliged to you and the cabinet for the handsome manner in which the confirmation was perfected. Be assured yourself, and let each member of the cabinet have the firmest conviction, that nothing in my power will be wanting to promote your and their reputation and prosperity. . . ."

To James Buchanan.[1]

"London, *February* 3, 1847.

"I received your letter with more pleasure than I like to own; for it was the first of a private personal nature, that I had received from Washington, since I have been on this side of the Atlantic. Continue I beg of you these little notices of passing and coming events.

"Baron Brunnow[2] of the Russian Legation has charged me with many kind messages for you. He calls to mind with very great satisfaction the time you

[1] Then Secretary of State.

[2] Russian Minister to England.

passed at St. Petersburg; and dwelt again and again upon the pleasure with which he remembered you.

"The extraordinary condition of England at this time, will have been observed by you. *In Ireland* the number of officials employed in distributing charity, is larger than our usual army; and the moneys required by the misery of the pauper population of that wretched island from the national revenues of Great Britain, will sweep away every trace of the economy of past years, and will amount to a larger sum than all our expenditures for the Mexican war. The manner in which British charity is applied, is also likely to foster and increase the evil rather than to apply to it a healing remedy. Two millions and a half in Ireland are now supplied from the British Treasury; and when will they consent to go back to their own utter destitution and forego the solace of boons from the public treasury?

"Lord Palmerston is, I think, not very strong in his hold on the public affections. In social life he is very agreeable, but he belongs to the old school of British statesmen, who think John Bull is everything, and that international law, treaties, and interests of all sorts must yield to British pretensions. In the affair with France, he is clearly wrong in his interpretation of the treaty of Utrecht; and in his declarations about Mexican privateers, he has not shewn the alacrity or the decision, which Lord Aberdeen would have done. I hope to his message through Pakenham, to which he referred in the House of Commons, you answered as explicitly as possible. You see that France at once

declares, that Frenchmen, under the circumstances described by the President, would be but pirates. In conversation with Palmerston, with whom I am on very friendly terms, I gave him an opportunity of saying civil things about you, by observing that I had heard you speak of having seen him in England. But in reference to our country, to the President, or to yourself, he has not wasted one civil word upon me. Lord John Russell is, I think, more alive to the importance of preserving the most friendly relations with us; but I think Palmerston has a good deal of sore feeling about our Mexican affair; and as he cannot interfere, is disposed to manifest in some way, that, after all, he has not been frightened by our American doctrine of non-interference.

"I have become acquainted with Lord Aberdeen,[1] and I like him very much. He has a frankness and openness, that let you know what he means and feels. His resignation was openly deplored to me on the part of one of the principal legations the other day. But for us, there will be, practically, no difference. Lord John is resolved on friendship with the United States; and all England is conscious that such friendship is necessary. We can do without England better than England can do without us.

"Write soon. Tell me all the news. Settle Mexican affairs as soon as possible. America will be the happiest, most prosperous, most envied country on earth."

[1] Palmerston's predecessor as Foreign Secretary in Peel's ministry.

To JOHN APPLETON.[1]

"LONDON, *February* 3, 1847.

". . . You are right in supposing that we were very cordially received. We find ourselves already having a circle of most agreeable acquaintances, among whom I am much disposed to single out Milman as one of the most agreeable. He is a man of unpretending excellence, cheerful, abounding in conversation, and being yet more agreeable than learned. He is one of the prebendary of Westminster, and a visit to his charming family takes us through the very arches of the old Abbey itself. Macaulay too, I have seen very often; and each day that I see him makes me more and more admire the wonderful extent and precision of his knowledge. His memory is as rare as his industry; and politics or theology, the ancient or the modern, the literature of all cultivated nations in all ages, are equally present to him. Nay the writers of the later ages among the Romans, and the works of the churchmen themselves seem more familiar to him than to canons and deans; and he is as ready to decide a question on the rules of proceeding in the Roman senate as to give a vote in the House of Commons. Mr. Hallam is another of the same great class, having a delightful benignity of expression and a mind richly stored with all kinds of learning.

"Besides them, I have already met Lord Mahon, Babbage the calculator, Lyell and a great many more, Thackeray, one of the writers for *Punch*, and Carlyle himself; Monckton Milnes, and Kenyon, Bowring and

[1] Chief Clerk of Navy Department under Bancroft.

many more, whose writings are so familiar to us in America.

"Of the public men, of course I know the ministry; in particular Lord John and Lord Palmerston. In the Houses of parliament I have already heard the gravity of Lord John, and the exquisite eloquence of Sir Robert Peel; the carping criticisms of Lord Stanley, and the strange, grotesque, humorous ebullitions of Lord Brougham. I do not think I wish myself back to squabble with members of Congress, and restrain greedy contractors. I wish the Judge [1] from my heart, all honour and happiness in his position. It is one of irksome labour and duty; but I hope may be rewarded with some glory in the progress of the war, to which I wish a speedy end.

"Your views on the Presidential question coincide with mine. But if the whigs drop and censure McLean of Ohio, his position as on the North of the line, as a resident of the West, and as a man of ability may give him an important influence in the decision of the struggle. Clay will not himself abate his own pretensions. It is not improbable, that the Whigs may name Crittenden, whom Clay could not decently oppose; but Crittenden is the only man to whom he would yield decorously, and to him Clay would yield most reluctantly.

"As to Mrs. Bancroft she enjoys her residence in England exceedingly. On the passage she suffered extreme torture; but the mild winter has favoured her

[1] John Y. Mason, Bancroft's successor as Secretary of the Navy.

restoration to health, and she is now uncommonly well and very happy. . . ."

The letter just quoted, and that which is to follow, prompt an interpolation with reference to the social aspects of Bancroft's life in London. That it was a time of frequent intercourse with many of the most interesting persons in England and France, the letters themselves will continue to show. These are supplemented by the diaries, or engagement books, which Bancroft kept with some care during these years abroad, and for the remainder of his life. The entries are mere suggestions, but they suggest much. A few specimen bits are as follows:

1847. *June* 19. Breakfast Mr. Rogers to meet Lady Noel Byron.

July 6. Cambridge Installation Festivities. Dinner at Trinity College with the Queen.

1848. *February* 28. Dinner at home.

Mad. & Chev. Bunsen.	Sir W. & Lady Molesworth
R. W. Emerson	
Monckton Milnes	Lord Morpeth
Mr. and Mrs. Milman	Macaulay

May 26. Tennyson called.

1849. *April* 18. Dinner at Mr. Charles Dickens.

May 8. Breakfast at home, Duke of Argyll, Dickens, Frothingham, Hallam, Milman, Bunsen, Macaulay.

Although these jottings anticipate, in their dates, the course of the present record, they are not without their bearing upon the following extract from a letter from

Bancroft's sister Lucretia (Mrs. Farnum)—the lively correspondent quoted in a previous chapter:

From Mrs. L. B. Farnum *to* George Bancroft.

"Waterford, *February* 23, 1847.

". . . Tell Betsey that on reading her letters, I was reminded of an evening of the first winter I spent with you, when she took the book containing her visiting list, and asked me to sit down, and read over the names, and see what acquaintances she had '*lost*' by her marriage with you, and the sigh with which she showed me that some of the Beacon St. aristocracy were among the number. From the titles that sprinkle her pages as 'thick as spatter,' I think she eventually found her loss a gain, for what is the mushroom aristocracy of a republic, that are here today and gone tomorrow, to the genuine dukes and duchesses, lords and ladies of a hereditary peerage? And then too, to find one's self taking precedence of them all! She will be the cynosure of all eyes when she gets back, and may drop whom she will in her turn, with or without reason. Please don't let her drop me."

Let Bancroft himself take up the story:

To Wm. H. Prescott.

"London, *March* 3, 1874.

"Mr. Ford,[1] whom I met a few evenings ago, has sent me a little volume to be forwarded to you, pleading

[1] Presumably Richard Ford, author of *Gatherings from Spain* (1846).

indeed, that it is a very inadequate return for what he received from you. His volume shall not go unaccompanied by a word from me, for I have not heard from you nor written to you, since the lines of our lives were cast in these pleasant places. I say pleasant places, for universal hospitality and kindness make it so to us, though in other respects the condition of English affairs is gloomy in the extreme. Millions of the Irish fasten themselves on the public treasury of England; and exist in inert apathetic dependence as idle pensioners, pleading misery as their title to bounty, and seeking to make that bounty perpetual by their own listless indifference to their welfare. But I did not mean to write of the pestilence and famine that are devastating Ireland; or tell you how terrible a vengeance the Irish people are taking, for having in old times been burdened with pensions to the English aristocracy.

"Poor O'Connell[1] is fast drawing near his end; nor have I as yet seen him; but Sheil, his great coadjutor in the work of Catholic emancipation, came up to me the other evening in the house of Commons, and his first words related to you. He said more about you, than I shall repeat; and in addition to his own ardent expressions, which had all the fervour of Irish impetuosity, uttered in a shrill, clear voice, that you would think was a woman's, he told me that the late Lord Holland used to say unreservedly to Englishmen, that there was not a man in England could have written a history like yours of Ferdinand and Isabella. I find here your name as familiar as though you had

[1] Daniel O'Connell, the Irish Liberator.

been born here; and at Christmas your books were as regularly advertised as suitable books for presents, as they are at Ticknor's in Boston.

"Our brother Historians, here, I see very often. Lord Mahon, younger by four or five years than either of us, has a young, and beautiful and really charming wife, who wins all hearts. Hallam has a countenance, so full of benevolence, mildly radiant with a most gentle and kindly expression, that he wins very rapidly on those that see him. The candour that pervades his nature and lights up his features makes you less regard a hesitancy of utterance. His good judgment shows itself as much in conversation as in his books; and his mind takes the widest range. He tells a pleasant story with animation, and as for the extent of his learning, I do not pretend to fathom it. Milman, with less vigour of character, is as mild and agreeable as possible; modest and unpretending; full of taste and of learning; hospitable and as worthy a nature as has sheltered itself for a century in the cloisters of Westminster. But Macaulay is the most extraordinary man of them all. He rises in my esteem (a cold word for what I mean) every time I see him; for his foibles show themselves at once; his greatness by degrees. He has the most nearly universal knowledge of any man I ever met; and his memory is as much disciplined to accuracy, as the extent of his reading is boundless. I have met him in all sorts of companies, and everywhere he is the oracle of all present. Among churchmen he shows more knowledge of ecclesiastics than all the bishops; he will go ahead of Milman and keep in advance

in quoting the fathers of the church and even the later Latin authors; and when Hallam falters about a letter of Pliny, he will give its date and tenour, and perhaps begin to quote it word for word. I think him, what is so rare, greater than his books. His defect is, that while he is very candid and laborious and of good impartial intentions as an inquirer, yet, when he forms an opinion, he fastens upon a subject or a character with a tenacity and vehemence which sometimes lead him to judgments which a more tranquil mind would qualify. But enough. Best regards to your mother. Do not let your wife forget or become indifferent to me. Let me hear from you. Put me in a way to render you any service." [1]

To PRESIDENT POLK.

"LONDON, *May* 14, 1847.

"I am able today to announce to you a very great and decided change in the views of England with reference to our war with Mexico, to our finances, and generally to the position of the administration and the country. The last news from the United States was too great, too important, and too significant to permit of being concealed or undervalued. 'You are the Lords of Mexico!' said Lord Ashburton [2] to me. 'How could you take the castle of Vera Cruz so soon?' said Lord Grey, one of the secretaries of state; [3] 'You have been entirely successful' said Lord Clarendon; [4] 'I hope your sacrifice will lead to a peace.'

[1] Letter lent by the late Linzee Prescott, Esq.
[2] Boundary Commissioner at Washington, 1842.
[3] At this time Secretary of State for the Colonies.
[4] At this time President of the Board of Trade.

And even Lord Palmerston, who, more than any of them, has one system of politics for England and quite a different one for other countries, spoke to me in the very warmest language of the generosity of America towards the Irish, and of the immense superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race as displayed in our great number of victories over the Mexicans. The newspapers indulge a good deal in splenetic remarks; but they are of no meaning; and England is even preparing to hear of our negotiating for half, or two thirds, or even the whole of Mexico. No party thinks to make of the question a handle against its opponents. They see our growth to be certain; and they like publicly and officially to take as little note of it as possible. On the other hand they look very wistfully at the working of Mr. Walker's Tariff and congratulate themselves upon the increase of our revenue.

"They have found out also, that America is growing rich. The slightest improvement in the rates of exchange was a few weeks ago announced by telegraph from Liverpool as the great event of the day: men speculated on how much more gold is likely to go to the United States; they own that the loan has not only been taken, but that more might have readily been borrowed; that the business concerns rest on a solid foundation, and they even go so far as sometimes to insinuate, that in the present time of scarcity and pressure the importation of breadstuffs from America should be made in American capital. This you will find substantially in the money articles of the *Morning Chronicle*.

"In the speech at the Lord Mayor's dinner on occa-

sion of the Easter Holiday, Lord John Russell expressed very warmly his sense of the conduct of America on occasion of the present distress in Ireland. He was sincere. I believe him as safe a Prime minister for us, as there could be. But he has been unsuccessful. He has no majority; and as I think will have none in the next parliament. With a pure mind and good intentions, he has not been able to make any strong impression on the public mind. But on the other hand, the protectionists, as the high Tories are called, will be quite as weak or weaker; so that the balance of power will rest with Sir Robert Peel. But can Peel and Russell coalesce; will England approve the Union? Will Peel consent to it? If it comes to be done, and every day increases the number of those who expect it, Peel must be Prime Minister, and Lord John perhaps go to the Lords.

"I beg my very best regards to Mrs. Polk. And let me assure you that I esteem your administration singularly faithful to democratic principles and successful in legislation, finance and war. If the whigs take advantage of the successes of the war which they opposed, to overturn your administration, the world will do you justice. The rest of your career will never be obliterated and will not easily be equalled."

To Wm. H. Prescott.

"London, 17 *August*, 1847.

"Glad am I, dear Prescott, to find the bag rich with a letter from you, full of everything agreeable but what relates to your eyes. I have no faith in doctors, but a

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great deal in Providence; so I hope for you the best. As to my work, I am getting superb materials; and had as lief a hundred should treat the same subject as not. If they do it with more heart than I, don't you see that as a good citizen of the republic, I must applaud and rejoice in being outdone? But it is not a Mignet Compendium I am trying to prepare; details give life and charm.

"But I am sadly tempted from the dull investigation of letters and folios of documents to excursions, which fill the day as full of pleasure as it well can be. Two beautiful summer days I gave to Stoke Pogis, now the seat of the Penns; where a charming house, magnificent Library, delightful grounds, the distant views of Eton and Windsor Castle, and the thousand memories, and sixty cubic feet of American documents, filled the time to the brim. As you approach the House through the Park, you have in the distance Windsor Castle, on which Dame Quickly invoked so much good luck, and where Shakespeare's meadow fairies still nightly sing, Like to the garter's compass in a ring. On the right stands the church whose ivy mantled towers inspired the best of Gray's poems; around it stand the graves of the forefathers, Gray's among the number. Just a few yards further on are the remains of Sir Edward Coke's old House, the scene of the Long Story;[1] and on one side a pillar commemorates the lawyer, while on the other a sepulchral monument gathers worshippers for the bard.

[1] Gray's verses in which the mansion-house at Stoke Pogis is incidentally described.

"Within, the house is modestly superb. The Library is rich in memorials of Gray. Here is his copy of *Linnæus*, interleaved, exceedingly full of minute and very clearly as well as neatly written annotations; with now and then a neat pen and ink sketch of the head of a bird. Gray was too good a scholar not to make his notes in Latin. I had no conception of the excessive, minute and persevering industry of Gray till I saw these volumes.[1] He died in 1771, and a folio on *Natural History*, first printed in 1770 bore marks of his study all the way through. Then there were his manuscript notes on Plutarch, Xenophon, Lycias, Socrates, Sophocles, all compactly written in an exquisite hand, with scarce an erasure, and that pink of accuracy, which leaves no room for an interlineation. The manuscripts of his poems were equally curious. On some he had himself marked the passages from which he had derived a thought, an image, a sentiment, or even a word. Of some there were manuscripts showing the poem at a stage different from what we read: every word that was subsequently changed, being clearly for the better, and often the new selection being miraculously fortunate. Here was his *Milton*, interleaved, with passages copied upon the insertions, from which Milton had borrowed, or which bore a striking

[1] Bought at auction by Mr. Penn in 1845, they passed, after an auction sale some years later, into the hands of Ruskin. At his death they were given to Prof. Charles Eliot Norton, and in a little volume, *The Poet Gray as a Naturalist*, edited by him, the history of the books is told, and Gray's notes and drawings are faithfully reproduced. This book was published by Charles E. Goodspeed, Boston, 1903.

analogy to his language or idea. Here too was his *Shakespeare* with many a most happy conjectural emendation.

"After lunch and looking at the pictures of Penn and the family, including a masterly Sir Joshua Reynolds, we drove to the remains of Lord Coke's house; thence to Gray's own place of abode; thence to his monument, his church and his churchyard, beautiful in the hour of evening, wanting nothing but the rugged elms.

"Then came the dinner: members of Parliament of the neighbourhood and others; the fattest buck from the park gracing the table.

"And next day a drive to the sequestered nook, where William Penn lies buried, without a monument; without even a headstone, in the Quaker graveyard, near the dell where stands the old Quaker meeting-house, embowered in trees, and as quiet and calm as though London were in another hemisphere.

"On the way back we drove through Beaconsfield. At the name I cried out Edmund Burke; and straightway we went to the Gregories, traced the ruins of the old house, which was burned down: went into his garden, studied out his walks; admired his trees; and tried to get a picture of his life. The larder abounded with good things: many a hogshead of ale was drunk there. No one had such merry harvest homes. His name was cherished all about: from all the villages round they came to his feasts.

"At the church which I entered, there was his pew, his grave, and the tablet in the wall to that part of him which was mortal. The churchyard has the tomb of

Waller under a huge walnut tree: but Waller's huge monument does not move like the plain slab to Edmund Burke, who must have had a kind heart, easily touched with sympathy.

"Brother antiquary! I have a great deal more to say: but twenty people have called since I began: and I seize this moment of quiet to send best regards to your family, to Mrs. Prescott and your mother; and to repeat how truly I am yours ever

"GEORGE BANCROFT.

"I laugh at the thought of your election storms. Blessed repose, that another continent guarantees! Blessed Atlantic, that quenches the passions before they can reach me!"[1]

To JAMES BUCHANAN.

"LONDON, 18 *October*, 1847.

". . . I was very glad to get your words on home matters. The people in America and all Europe expect an increase of territory as the consequence of our Mexican war. The cry of no more territory, which the whigs have substituted for their adoption of the Wilmot proviso, is the most absurd they could have chosen, and will ensure their defeat except with a candidate who by life and position is pledged to the opposite policy. I hope you will take some quiet occasion, unsought and incidental, to say a word in public on the tariff question. A year's residence would convince you, how entirely we are now beyond all danger of being interfered with injuriously by England. The condition of

[1] Letter lost by the late Linzer Prescott, Esq.

this country is sad beyond measure in all that relates to the labouring classes. Those classes are excessively numerous; and the employer must either employ six to do the work of three, or support three in total idleness as paupers. Ours is the country of hope; this of despondency.

"Pray keep me well informed on Mexican matters, and send the earliest tidings of peace. Tell the president this anecdote, which is certain. The Duke de Broglie, now French ambassador here, said a few days ago to a person of high position and exceedingly well acquainted with the views of this Government; 'How do you explain that the English Government look on and witness the immense successes of the United States in Mexico with so much indifference? How do you explain this?' And this he said, as one who wondered that England had not proposed to France a renewal of the *Entente Cordiale*, in reference to this very subject of Mexico.* Then the Diplomatist sighed over the vanishing of M. Guizot's Balance of power in North America. But my last moment is come. Write me again very soon. My wife sends you her best regards.

*"The Duke received for answer, that England is too wise to waste itself by unprofitably interfering in such a cause: that Mexico in the hands of America will be to English commerce and English capital of more value than Mexico in its former state."

On November 3, 1847, Bancroft, in a letter to William Cullen Bryant, told of his work on the postal arrangement with Great Britain. On the same day he made

to Lord Palmerston his first proposals towards modifying the restrictions upon commerce. The passage from the Bryant letter and the formal communication to the British Foreign Secretary, throw sufficient light upon Bancroft's achievements and intentions in these two important matters.

To W. C. Bryant.

"I have been trying all the summer to make a postal arrangement with the Post Office here; and in the end, I will succeed in getting a very good one. They come to it with dreadful reluctance. I have made them every offer of reciprocity under every possible form; and from very shame they will be obliged to agree to some of the propositions. Meantime they wish a vantage ground in the negotiation, and so exact 4 francs an ounce on our letters forwarded to France, and double postage on our letters delivered from our packets in England. And this is a free trade ministry!"

To Lord Palmerston.

"The Undersigned, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, has the honour to inquire of Viscount Palmerston, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if Her Majesty's Government is inclined to remove existing restrictions on international commerce.

"Should Her Majesty's Government be so inclined, the Undersigned is prepared, on the part of the American Government to propose that British Ships may trade from any port in the world, to any Port in the

United States, and be received, protected, and in respect to charges and duties, treated like American ships, if, reciprocally, American ships may in like manner trade from any port of the world to any port under the dominion of Her Britannic Majesty.

"The removal of commercial restrictions, while it would be of mutual advantage to the material interests of of both countries, could not but give openings to still further relations of amity between them; and, by its influence on the intercourse of nations, create new guarantees for the peace of the world.

"The Undersigned avails himself of this occasion to renew to Viscount Palmerston the assurance of his distinguished consideration.

"GEORGE BANCROFT.

"AMERICAN LEGATION,
"*3d November*, 1847."

A further portion of the letter to Bryant should be included:

". . . The state of England is dreadful. Ireland suffers almost as much as last year. This island swarms with Irish, and has besides more of its own poor, than it knows what to do with. Our country is the freest, and ours will be the most opulent, perhaps is so already. The general poverty here is appalling. Send a tariff man to England, and he must be cured. Here five are employed to do the work of two; because if not employed, the number supported by poor-rates would be still further increased. Then here there is *no hope* for the poor. Their youth is dreamy and doleful;

their prospect of age horrible. Men cannot work to advantage, unless they are cheered; and in England [some words omitted] heard a labouring man sing or hum a tune, or smile.

"Best regards to B. F. Butler. I join the groups of mourners for the death of Silas Wright, a wonderful man; by his position in the senate commanding the attention of the world, having been the peer of the greatest statesmen of his time, and at home the associate and companion and peer of the farmers and artisans of his village. In whatever position he was placed, he was in proportion to it; a model of a republican public man; equal to all duties; the associate of the people, and their faithful servant; in humbler retirement never seeming above his position, and never inferior to the highest offices or the weightiest public trusts. One so great and of such simplicity, so choice and almost unique, and yet so entirely one of the common people, the leader and teacher and guide of the mass, and yet so unaspiringly of the mass, I never knew. Our country abounds in great men, in great deeds, and we have the one with us as such every day friends, and we share the benefits of the other as we do air and light so without reflection, that we forget to contemplate them with the veneration they deserve. But my paper fails, tho' half is not said."

To President Polk.

"London, 18 *November*, 1847.

"I must write to you though but a word to express how much Mrs. Bancroft and I have been grieved to

hear of your serious illness. I trust the frosts of November have restored your vigour. The policy of this country is looking with more and more friendliness towards the United States. Though you annex all Mexico, England will not trouble herself much about it. The kindly disposition has for the last year been steadily on the increase; and I do not think it likely to be impaired. The valour of our soldiers in Mexico has raised our character throughout Europe.

"You will find among the matter for Buchanan today, evidence of my zeal to advance the interests of your administration. If we can succeed in abolishing the remaining restrictions on trade, we shall accomplish a result that will mark your administration. I have been aided in conducting this discussion by the experience I had of old as collector of Boston, little thinking that my study of the Navigation Laws at that day would ever be of real service in another position.

"I congratulate [you] on the great and marvellous success of our arms in Mexico. An honourable peace would still, doubtless be the best, but if Mexico will not have it, then our duty is manifest to hold the country and await the counsels of futurity. England wishes us peace and has no great, at least no serious, objections to our getting good terms. It is becoming a fashion, rather, to expect the absorption of all Mexico.

"This ministry we have now great reason to wish should stand. They will encounter immense opposition. Finances are disordered; business stagnant; Ireland starving and anarchical. Everything is ominous of serious struggles. The repeal of the Navigation

Laws will be most vigorously resisted. Perhaps you will allude to the subject generally in the message, like the Queen. Let me before closing add, that Sardinia, Tuscany and Rome are on the point of completing a Customs-Union, dreadful to Austria.

"I beg my best regards to my great and good friend Mrs. Polk."

To President Polk.

"London, 28 *January*, 1848.

"I cannot let this steamer go to America without saying to you myself how greatly I was delighted with your message. The compact logic is irresistible; and the policy recommended with admirable dialectics was exactly the counterpart and consequence of the previous argument. While I very much, for your sake and for the sake or our country and world, wish that we could make peace, I think your present position the only tenable one. In Paris I met Alexander von Humboldt, and he gave me leave to say to you, how greatly he was pleased with it. The amount of territory you demand, he deemed to be legitimately due to us; and the tone of moderation that prevails through the message won for it his cordial, unhesitating adhesion. His opinion is of value; for having been honoured with Mexican citizenship, the bias of his partialities is for Mexico.

"The uproar in the English prints I have already explained to you. This is a proud nation; and loves to interfere in the affairs of other countries: would have loved the possibility of becoming the protector of

Mexico. But it dares not attempt it, and conceals its own humiliating sense of weakness, partly by undervaluing our successes and partly by calumniating and falsifying the character of our nation in its conduct towards Mexico.

"Last Saturday I received personally an honour that in itself and in the manner in which it was conferred on me, gave me so much pleasure, that I cannot but communicate it to you. The Institute of France has a small and limited number of correspondents, elected from the men of letters and science in all parts of the world. To be one of these few is a distinction very much coveted and often very perseveringly solicited. A vacancy having occurred in the section of History in the Academy of the moral and political sciences, the section without my previous knowledge unanimously placed my name at the head of the list from which the vacancy was to be filled; and last Saturday, five names having been presented to the Academy as candidates, I received every vote for the vacant place but one. This majority was pleasing; and as the election was a spontaneous act, wholly unsolicited on my part, the manner in which the appointment came to me was as agreeable as the honour itself."

To Edward Everett.

"90 Eaton Square, 10 *March*, 1848.

"I dare say you have very often delayed writing to a friend till the morning of the last day, from the desire of giving the last and freshest news, and then have found time wanting to write at all. This has repeatedly

been my case as almost now; for I wished to express to you how greatly I was delighted by your kind and affectionate letter of January. I received it in Paris, where I became intimately acquainted with Lamartine and Thiers and visited Louis Blanc and Odilon Barrot. Wonderful times there! Greece colonised. Her colonies became republics, and the mother state threw off monarchy too. Our republic is teaching Europe to do the same. Of the six great civilised States, two now are republics: and more will follow. What need has Sicily of a king whose presence is only felt by the bombardment of Messina? Of what use to Spain is a queen who does but renew the barren impurities of a Messalina? What good does the Coburg accomplish in Portugal except to tempt England to an interference in favour of unjust power? What benefit has Neufchatel from the patronage of Prussia? The world is growing weary of that most costly of all luxuries, hereditary kings. Guizot who is here, throws all blame for the course pursued in France on the King. Guizot wished to concede very insignificant reforms; but Louis Philippe forbade: and his minister loved office too well to retire. When affairs reached a crisis, Louis Philippe thought to save himself by sacrificing an unpopular minister. But it was too late. The soldiers knew no longer whom to obey; and the people drove off monarchy in the most humiliating manner—shorn of its crown, its wig, its whiskers, its clothes, its purse, leaving it to land as a beggar on the shores of England. The drama has been one, where the people have acted sublimely; and where monarchy has appeared ridicu-

lous. It has had no martyrs, no sympathy, and no respect. 'If Louis Philippe,' says Guizot, 'had had but one quarter of the good conduct of the king and queen of the Belgians, we should all have been now in Paris,' and he applauds the conduct of Leopold and his wife as loudly as he condemns the master whom he served. It seems, that the French King lost his self-possession, followed the advice of Nemours and Montpensier, and disrupted Guizot's ministry at fifteen minutes' notice; and was driven from his own palace almost as abruptly himself.

"Here there is consternation. The high aristocracy dread the future. A deficient revenue excites alarm. Smith O'Brien [1] has gone over to Ireland, eager for power, and willing to be a martyr if he can gain glory by it. But Peel gives to the ministry his firm support and as I know, will do so, and with that support they will hold a majority. There were riots in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester and London, but civil force as yet has suppressed them: and the fashionable doctrine is that riots save a rebellion. The Duchess de Montpensier (whose Spanish Femme de Chambre saved her jewels) is this morning gone to Spain: the rest of the royal family are pennyless While Guizot blames the king for duplicity, the king blames Guizot for not having resigned long before. The king is *pennyless*. The Queen came over without a change of linen to her back, brought nothing, *pas une chemise*. The Duke de Nemours had not even a pair of slippers. The

[1] 1848 was the year of O'Brien's trial and conviction for high treason in attempting to raise an Irish insurrection.

whole family is a troop of beggars and not very jolly ones, as you may believe. They [have] nothing but eyes for tears."

To JAMES BUCHANAN.

"LONDON, 24 *March*, 1848.

"Am I never again to have a letter from you? Have you made peace with Mexico? Is the country rousing itself for sound principles? Has the echo of American Democracy which you now hear from France, and Austria, and Prussia and all Old Germany, no power to stir up the hearts of the American people to new achievements? Can we show ourselves lukewarm, while the old World is shaking off its chains and emancipating and enthroning the masses? I can only say for myself that my residence in Europe has but quickened and confirmed my love for the rule of the people, and I do not believe that any arrangement of political power short of universal suffrage, can give to freedom the security which it needs in planning legislation suited to the advancement of the race. . . .

"Here the aristocracy are overwhelmed with gloom. In the court circle I alone am the one to speak and think of the French republic with hope, with subdued exultation, with trust. The Queen was greatly agitated. The nobility are all the time congratulating one another, that here, at least, they are safe for some time longer: but if France succeeds, there will not be a crown left in Europe in twenty years, except in Russia, and perhaps England may hold over a little while longer than the rest."

AUSTIN COLLEGE LIBRARY

To Wm. H. Prescott.

"London, 15 *September*, 1848.

". . . Tell your son, what of course he knows, and what I have written to him, that I shall be, on his own account as well as on yours, very careful to render him every aid when he comes to London; though for myself I do not intend to remain here a great while longer. It is a pleasant life, very; for a season or two it is instructive. Then it might enfeeble. I begin to sigh a little for republican air: and for the homely sincerity of American life and the rough vigour of our institutions and people. Yet in the way of social enjoyment, nothing can exceed what this island offers. We passed three days at Taymouth castle,[1] with very few other guests; and it would be hard for the imagination to devise an addition to the charms which a princely hospitality lavished, yet with measure. Our hosts owned estates, stretching continuously a hundred miles in length: yet he was a hearty, sincere, frank, liberal person, unassuming, even a Free Church man; but she, to the remains of very great beauty, added that highest charm in the aristocratic manner, where experience of sorrow has softened pride, and increased sympathy with others without loss of dignity. I dare say you remember how charming the country round Kenmore is: the fall of Moness, the Birches of Aberfeldy, fragrant in the poetry of Burns, Glen Lyon, the Lock Tay, the high mountains, the clear water of the rushing river, the most charming persons as guides to all

[1] The seat of Lord Breadalbane, Lord Chamberlain, in Perthshire.

that was best, made our three days a little bit out of Elysium.

"Of notabilities in Scotland, I saw the great lion Jeffrey, who in his old age has still a glowing eye, a brilliant air, and a flood of conversation, speaking a good deal of you: Empson his son-in-law, now editor of the *Edinburgh*, who is full of literary anecdotes, dropping out of his budget excellent stories of Brougham in his young days; the metaphysician Sir William Hamilton, now, alas! tottering under the infirmities of palsy; the poet Wilson, who made to me about your conquest of Mexico, the very same remark I made to you when it first came out, and who was as full of cheerful talk and almost fun as the hours could be.

"Of course we made the tour of Kelso and Dryburgh Abbey, and Melrose and Abbotsford. The last place is sneered at by the grandees, who cannot bear to have a poet and a man of letters make a place for himself in the landed aristocracy; but the sneer is without reason. Abbotsford is substantially built of stone; and full of truly beautiful carvings. The site is not grand: a river-bank and no more: but let those who can, pass unmoved through the pleasant sitting-room in which *Ivanhoe* was written, or the salon, in which he prayed those about him in the fine autumn day to open the window, that he might hear the rustling of the Tweed in those moments of his death agony. I return from Scotland a greater admirer of Scott, the poet; and it seems to me that his poems, on which I think his immortality rests, have passages which for rush of narrative, for motion, life, contrasts of many kinds, have not

been surpassed since Homer. 'The Lord of the Isles' as a poem is full of imperfections: but what passages! And where is there anything told like the battle in 'Marmion'!

"I have much to say: would I could sit with you and Susan and perhaps Mrs. Dexter and chat till late into the evening: but I must come to your letter. The same motive which induced me long ago to give over writing reviews of living people's works, is a good one for your decision about the new conquest of Mexico. Nobody would have been contented. You must have scattered laurels more abundantly than Alexander did gifts, to have satisfied the thousand and one heroes, each one of whom was in his own estimate at least the pivot of success. But the theme is a noble one; and even more picturesque and vivid than the march of Cortes; and if you could be content with the applause of your country and indifferent to the complaints of those whose deeds you record, you would achieve a brilliant success. The whole affair was magical, and worthy of being told in your happiest manner.

"Touching politics, Cass seems now more likely to succeed. I avowed my preference for him, when letters came saying he would not succeed. I do it still for two reasons, first because I regard the democratic policy in affairs of trade and currency the *only* safe one. But next because I regard him as the candidate of *Union*. As such he will succeed. You know how ardently I supported Van Buren while he was true to himself, encountering obloquy even from a part of my own party. But I cannot support him now: rather in his coalition

with Adams I say as Pitt said of Fox and North, I forbid the Banns.

"Europe is in a fine state of hubbub: and is not going to grow quiet for a long time. Aristocracy stood firm on the continent: but its hour is come. Aristocracy is entrenched apparently beyond the reach of assailants, in this wonderful island: but wait a while: you will see, after many days, the bread come back to be eaten here." [1]

To W. D. Bliss.

"London, 22 *September*, 1848.

". . . Europe is in a dismal state. Nothing but the recognition of the power of the people can save it; and the princes and aristocracies cannot bear the thought of resigning their supremacy. Who can read the future? I have all along believed, that matters would grow more and more confused, before they became tranquil. Kings yield and then resist; and so it will go on, till Europe is unhinged.

"Our own country furnishes the only example of a people contented with its government. I love the principle of popular power that lies at the bottom of our institutions and I love the Union. The Union must be preserved. So I would decide questions relating to slavery by appeals to the collective judgment of the nation, and not by a local party organisation. The last, if it carries its purpose, carries it by an arm of force; in the former case the whole country will acquiesce in the decision which is nurtured by the reason of

[1] From letter lent by the late Linzee Prescott, Esq.

the whole people. Hence were I at home, I should adhere to the democratic nominations of Cass and Butler in the full faith that such adherence would but increase my power to advocate any measure, which a just regard for right might urge me to defend.

"Your mother and I have been passing three delightful days at Drayton Manor, where we saw Sir Robert in retirement. I look upon him as the greatest statesman in England. He is not enough of a liberal for my taste, but while he will not hasten reforms, he accepts those which time matures. The state of parties renders it difficult for him to return to office; though his reputation is now at its height.

"Love to all friends,

"Your affectionate Father,

"GEORGE BANCROFT."

In September of 1848 President Polk wrote to Bancroft, enclosing two newspaper letters which attacked Polk's course immediately after taking office with regard to the annexation of Texas, and asking for Bancroft's recollections of the circumstances. In two letters, written October 13th, Bancroft replied at length, to the effect that Polk appeared indifferent as to a choice between the two forms of annexation offered by Congress, so long as "the declared wishes of the Democratic party should have effect"; that the choice was made upon the unanimous advice of the five members of his Cabinet who were confirmed without the delay which befell Bancroft's confirmation by the Senate; that the belated complaints of the newspaper corre-

spondents were quite without foundation; and that he had never heard any fault found with Polk's "course on the annexation of Texas, except by those who did not want it annexed at all." These letters have an historic value for the light they throw upon a vital episode in the Polk administration—a value so much greater than that of their bearing upon Bancroft's personal history that this mention of them must suffice.

A week later he was writing to Polk again, expressing, as the following passage will show, his lively interest in the impending presidential contest between General Taylor and General Cass:

To President Polk.

"London, 20 *October*, 1848.

". . . This country, in the midst of all the revolutions around it, is as full of apathy as possible. There is no movement: no cracking of the fabric: no rending of the wall. And yet there is a deep foreboding of the future. How it will come I cannot certainly foresee: but it seems to me, the form revolution will take here, is through the finances. The questions about the income-tax and the war-tax will shake England pretty thoroughly, when the income-tax requires renewal, and when the corn laws reduce materially the price of corn. But as yet habits of subserviency to the aristocracy are so branded into the national character, that the people generally are satisfied with their institutions. They keep down pretty well their envy at our success, their consciousness that we are going forward full of hope, while their future is clouded;

but a growl against the results of your administration is sometimes heard; and they dread the very name of Cass, as of one who would swallow Pococatapetl at a bite, make but one mouthful of Canada, and help the Irish every way he can. But after the seventh of November, they will speak of him in more kindly terms. The candidate of the Whigs may pass current with his party, if England's endorsement of him is sufficient."

Bancroft's faith that his party would triumph in the election of Cass over Taylor is indicated by the forecast of the electoral vote, by States, in his diary for 1848. According to these figures, the democratic candidate won by just as comfortable a majority as that which the voters actually gave to Taylor. Some weeks before the following letter reached him he must have received the unwelcome news.

From JAMES BUCHANAN *to* GEORGE BANCROFT.

"WASHINGTON, 11 *December*, 1848.

"You were doubtless astonished at the result of the Presidential election. It is deeply mortifying to me; and especially as Pennsylvania abandoned the Democratic candidates. Coal and Iron have exercised a more important influence than I had apprehended. But it is vain to regret the past. 'Not Jove himself upon the past has power.' We must look to the future.

"The administration of General Taylor will, I have no doubt, *be decidedly Whig:* and the more Whig it is the better for the Democratic party. You are a shining mark and your able and efficient services, with your

eminent and popular character in Great Britain will not save you from proscription. There are several gentlemen anxious to obtain your place. Indeed from present appearances, there will be a fiercer scramble for the spoils than at the commencement of General Harrison's administration. Taylor is, I believe, honest and firm; but he is a decided Whig. He may possibly, for a brief period, resist proscription; but he must eventually yield.

"In the midst of our misfortunes, I have the consolation that I hope before very long to see Mrs. Bancroft and yourself. I have a thousand things to say to you.

"Should you determine not to return to Massachusetts, I should think that this city would be a most agreeable residence for you. It is a duty which I owe to the party in Pennsylvania to return there; but if I were to leave that State Washington should be my place of residence."

As if in answer to Buchanan's letter, Bancroft wrote to Buchanan, December 15th:

". . . Coal and iron were too hard for us. I am not surprised. The present price of iron in England is one, which is making bankrupts of the greatest houses. I am not astonished at the spasmodic action of the ironmasters of Pennsylvania. If we could have foreseen the effects of European revolutions they might have been guarded against. And but for Van Buren we should still have been successful.

"Now what is to be done? Shall I resign? Shall I wait? How are matters opening? What prospect of the re-organisation of our party? Let me still hear from you often. Let us show our regard to principles by being as good friends in a moment of defeat as in success. Your four years in the State Department have been of the utmost importance. Oregon settled, Texas acquired, California and New Mexico purchased, these are great events, such as no future secretary of State can hope to be engaged in. I regret that you are not in the Senate of the United States; but you will bring Pennsylvania right."

From this time forth Bancroft's letters to the President, to the Secretary of State, and to other friends in and out of the Cabinet were concerned largely with the question of his resignation. The conclusion of the postal negotiations, and the deferred settlement of the navigation laws continued to receive their full share of attention. On January 5, 1849, President Polk wrote to him: "I congratulate you upon your success in the negotiation of the Postal Treaty. I submitted it to the Senate on yesterday, and today that body advised and consented to its ratification." From a mass of correspondence the following passages, illustrating for the most part, the other points mentioned, are selected:

To Wm. H. Prescott.

"London, 11 *January*, 1849.

". . . And so you are glad you poor whigs have stolen into power under Mexican colours! Of course I

regret deeply the defeat of my party; but if my enemies think to do me a harm by obtaining my recall, they will find themselves mightily mistaken. Had Cass been elected, I should have remained here a certain number of months, and then, from love to letters, have resigned a post, in which I have been nearly long enough. The worst that the enemy can do, is to recall me a short space before I intended to come, and to take from me the little bit of glory, of voluntarily resigning a station where I have found nothing but success and kindness for the continuance of a career which alone opens up a way to some share in the undivided sympathy of my countrymen. Yet to have resided here has been an immense advantage. The constant enjoyment of the most refined and cultured society, the change of scene, the opportunities of observing statesmen and institutions, Lords, commoners and ministers, have at once instructed me and have soothed and benefited me, when I most needed it. But I would not remain here much longer. I shall stay long enough to give the opportunity of recall, if resolved on: long enough, if the recall be not resolved on, to show that I come home voluntarily: but I shall consider life lost, if I were to pass even as much more time as I have already. Here in London, to write is impossible; except dispatches and notes, of which I indited on little nothings and a few matters of importance as much as would make in bulk the Conquest of Mexico. But it is all naught. Mr. Macaulay says, one man can do but one thing well at a time; and so gave up his post in the cabinet, and took to the Historic Muse. I am of his opinion, now

in my approaching old age. So I shall soon return, pitch my tent in New York, and try to tell how Prescott defended Bunker Hill; how Franklin swayed France to our assistance; how Choiseul charmed the courts of Europe into a peaceful applause of our insurrection; how Lord North battled with his own ministry in which he was in a minority, and let himself be led against his judgment; how the Empress Catherine humbugged the British minister and favoured us; how the inimitable Washington not only was the bravest in war, but the wise, loving, generous, creating father of our blessed form of government. People here have heaped me full of documents. Lord North's daughter gave me all she had, and all her reminiscences to boot. The Duke of Grafton sent to my house a big box holding the most private papers of the old Duke with the key and unbounded license to use the contents at my discretion; Lord Dartmouth the papers of his pious progenitor who, you remember, was

> The one who wears a coronet and prays.

Then I have every letter written to every dog of a cut-throat that went into the wilderness to set the Indians upon us. What need of many words? I have nearly all said or written in London or Paris or Berlin, etc., etc., and as far as eyesight, which these researches wasted horribly, and money which I have spent lavishly, would permit. And when I get my papers completed, and nicely bound with gilt edges at top and nice gilt backs, I shall snap my fingers at the whole of your

Whig party; but though I am not to live near you I shall ever be

"Dear Prescott,

"most truly yours,

"GEORGE BANCROFT.

"We have just returned from a most delightful visit to Althorpe, Lord Spencer's. I brought away a copy of the inscription on the tomb of the father of the Washingtons who came to us; that is, of our George's great great grandfather. He had 17 children. No wonder two went to America." [1]

To JOHN DAVIS.

"Entirely private
and confidential.

"1, UPPER BELGRAVE STREET,

"23 *February*, 1849.

"*My dear Brother*, . . . I am still ignorant today who is the Secretary of State to whom my letter for the Dep't will go. I write on business much as if nothing had happened. Great Britain proposes to open to us all her colonial trade; as well as to do away with restrictions on indirect trade. A change of administration does not change the engagements of the Government: but it will have the happiest effect if Genl. Taylor will immediately authorise me, to say that he is disposed to meet the British Government on terms of reciprocity in matters of navigation. I do not dare to write in a despatch how much we shall be the gainers by the change in the Navigation Laws. I enclose you a

[1] From letter lent by Linzee Prescott, Esq.

copy of the bill, simply adding, that Mr. Labouchere[1] says, we shall gain with the East Indies all we want. If I am able to complete my convention, what *special* good will colonies do Great Britain? She must guard and govern them at great cost; but as for Trade we shall take to ourselves all her West India trade and more than half her Canada trade. Pray inquire of the new Secretary of State about this: *and have a proper letter full of kindness to this government written, one that I can show to them.* There is a new minister to America also. It would be well *to send a message, that he will be well received.*

"I have not sent forward a resignation. I am well aware of the strong desire of many to have my place: but I displaced no one. I refused to displace any one: and I have not yet finished the objects for which I accepted this post. When those are finished, my own wishes and the objects of my life will lead me home. I am getting on in life; I must write the history of the Revolution before life ebbs. Had the period of Mr. Polk's administration been much longer, or had Cass been chosen, I should have acted as I shall act now: that is to say; with me the change of administration will not (for anything I now know) hasten or retard the period of my resigning. The executive, of course, can change its agents, if it will; but I do not apprehend an interference with the business actually in hand. Be that as it may: do not give yourself one moment's uneasiness for me. The most I could ask would be, as living here costs more than the salary, as horses,

[1] President of the Board of Trade.

carriage, house, etc., must be taken at a cost of more than four thousand dollars a year, to put me on my guard, for I could not afford to throw away a large sum foolishly.

"Meantime I look forward with great satisfaction to our meeting in any event ere very very long under the quiet roof of my own home in America. I shall live in New York, and shall naturally see you often. If your turn were for this sort of life, you could not do better than come to England, when I get ready to quit: for the even climate would give you a new lease of life."

On April 5th Bancroft wrote to Samuel Hooper of Boston, complaining of the short-sightedness of New England ship owners in opposing his wish on the Navigation Acts, and made this postscript to his letter:

"I hope you don't believe a word of the nonsense in the American Papers about my having exceeded my instructions or acted without them. I had full authority for all I have done. And I hope you don't think I would embarrass the administration. On the contrary, losing the hope of finishing the business at which I have been at work these two years, I have, in the most disinterested manner and with singleness of purpose, been attempting to ensure the success of him who may follow me."

To John Davis.

"*Friday*, 4 *May*, 1849.

". . . Webster's unprovoked attack on me in the

Senate,[1] has had a very bad effect here. If I were with you, I could give you a thousand reasons why the President should sustain me. I could have had the whole British colonial trade and the indirect trade opened to our ships by the first day of September next.

"I had made up my mind as to resignation if the President had continued to me his confidence. I wait to see the issue of Webster's attack; and if it passes to nothing, I shall still hope to see you of my own choice in September. I cannot well break up before the middle or end of August, my children are so scattered.

"I begin to think, that I am destined to take over with me the approved act of the Repeal of the Navigation Acts. Surely the President, from whom otherwise I have nothing to hope or fear, who can do me otherwise neither benefit nor injury will not withhold from such successful exertions that just approbation, to which they may be entitled. I want nothing but to return with the credit that properly belongs to me. I know

[1] On March 12, 1849, Webster introduced in the Senate a resolution calling for information from the President on Bancroft's authority to arrange with the British Government for the opening of the coasting trade of the United States to foreign vessels. "All must agree," he said in his brief speech on behalf of the resolution, "that the subject is vastly important. And I confess I was a little startled to find that the American minister, who is now remaining in England, has, at the present moment, and under existing circumstances, offered to act immediately in a proposition for a convention to throw open the whole coasting trade of the United States freely, and without discrimination, to British vessels." Webster's resolution was adopted. See *Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster, National Edition*, Vol. XIV, pp. 339–341.

not why the president could wish to injure me. This repeal of the British Navigation Acts, this opening of the British colonial and indirect trade without one concession in return beyond what is in our Statute Book, brought near its completion by my efforts in part, as the Gov't admits, would in the days of Washington have met a very different reception from anything, I have as yet received.

[P. S.] "You may tell the President, if he takes an interest in the matter and you write to him, that Lord Lyndhurst says the Bill will pass the House of Lords; and Lord Lansdowne assured me, the fate of the bill would seal the fate of the Ministry. Lord Beaumont who voted against the repeal of the corn laws, told me, the bill was my bill, that it never would have been brought in but for me, and he added he would give a vote for it. . ."

In June Bancroft received notice that the Governors of Oxford University wished to bestow upon him the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, *Honoris Causa*. They were "not only desirous of testifying their sense of your literary and personal merits," said the letter announcing the honour, "but also of giving one more proof of the spirit which animates them with respect to that great country which you so well represent." On June 21st the ceremony was performed, and the next day Bancroft wrote to his brother-in-law, John Davis:

"Yesterday the University of Oxford made me *honoris causa*, a doctor. Everett was opposed, being a

conservative: and the radical and heretic had all votes and all cheering voices."

A month later he wrote again to this correspondent:

To JOHN DAVIS.

"25 *July*, 1849.

". . . As to the information you give about politics, Mr. Hooper of Boston, Mr. Prescott, and Mr. Bates [1] told me all about it long ago. I knew all about the wish of this administration to turn me out without ceremony or time to say my prayers, and knew very well, that Mr. Lawrence's [2] convenience, to which he compelled them to yield, was the only reason I am in office now. Of my views I kept the government informed officially. They could not doubt, that I was entirely indifferent to their decisions, for I wrote them so in very plain words. You advise me to resign. I wished very much to have it in my power to resign. In a former letter I gave you one reason, which interfered: the president withheld his approbation when I deserved it. Had he treated me, as I think he should have done, and as any one of his predecessors would have done, I could have resigned with honour and satisfaction. Your letters now add another reason for not resigning: viz. that a successor has already been appointed. For would it not be ridiculous for me to resign, when I am already superseded? The adminis-

[1] Joshua Bates, London banker, native of Boston, and benefactor of Boston Public Library.

[2] Abbott Lawrence, Bancroft's successor at London.

tration does not act frankly; and I judge from your letter that either they withhold something from you, or you think you ought not tell me the whole story. However: the gaps in your letter, Mr. Hooper had in advance filled up for me, explaining to me how earnestly my successor had begged for time till October. I shall leave London before his arrival. Not from any want of good will to him: on the contrary I have a great regard for Mr. Lawrence, and shall do all in my power and am doing it, to secure him a cordial welcome. He may be sure of a splendid reception. He will find things on a very good footing; and he has only to be reasonable and to be firm with the ministry to get on very smoothly in the public business. . . ."

The conclusion of Bancroft's mission was near at hand. When he landed in America his faithful friend, Prescott, writing September 15th, extended to him the following greeting: "So here you are again in the land of the stars and stripes, with all your vice-regal glories faded away into liberty and equality. I do not doubt that you are quite content, and that you saw the rocky shores of New England with greater pleasure than you greeted the cliffs of Albion." He invited Bancroft at once to his "Yankee" establishment at Pepperell, saying: "You will find here, what the best estate in England could not show you—that is, an old friend."

The official farewell which followed him to America, formal though it be, may best bring the London section of this chapter to its close:

From LORD PALMERSTON *to* GEORGE BANCROFT.

"FOREIGN OFFICE,

"*September* 15, 1849.

"*Sir*,—I have had the honour to receive the Letter which you addressed to me on the 31st ultimo, announcing your approaching departure for the United States, and enclosing the Letter by which The President notifies to The Queen the termination of your functions as the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at this Court.

"Although your departure took place so soon after the date of your Letter that I was unable to reply to it while you were yet in this Country, I trust you will still allow me to thank you for the friendly sentiments which you have expressed towards me; to assure you of the high Esteem and Regard, which I feel for you; and of my regret at the termination of the official intercourse which I have had the pleasure to hold with you.

"I did not fail to lay before The Queen the Letter from The President which notified your recall, and which was inclosed in your Letter; and I have to acquaint you that Her Majesty has addressed a Letter to The President in reply, expressing Her entire satisfaction with your language and conduct during the period of your mission at this Court.

"I have the honour to be, with high Consideration,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient

"humble Servant,

"PALMERSTON."

II

LETTERS FROM PARIS

The package of almost daily letters which Bancroft—visiting Paris at different times, seven at least, between 1847 and 1849—wrote to his wife in London separates itself sharply from the mass of correspondence already drawn upon. It has been seen that Bancroft put to good use his opportunities for access to unpublished historical material in England. The government archives at Paris contained rich veins of the same ore. To bring it to the light, Bancroft's visits to Paris were made. He was in England when Louis Philippe was overthrown;[1] but the Paris of the months immediately before and after that event became familiar to him. The time and the place combined to yield the man to whom every door was opened impressions of the sort from which illuminative letters are made. From the chief actors to the chorus, all the troupe of dramatic Paris in one of its most characteristic displays fell under the observer's eye. Except for a minimum of links, supplied from unpublished letters and the laconic diary already mentioned, and for a few explanatory foot-notes, the letters shall speak for themselves.

"*Wednesday, March* 31, 1847.

"It is Passion Week, my dear Elizabeth, and there are no great receptions. French Decorum respects the establishments and the festivals of the church; so

[1] See letter to Edward Everett, pp. 30–33.

Guizot did not open his doors last night; and I have done nothing about him but leave a card at the Foreign Office. After I finished my letter to you yesterday, I went round to see Martin,[1] where I found George Sumner.[2] I was very much pleased with him, and with his manner of viewing the world. He is a person whom you would like; and his opinions, as far as I became acquainted with them yesterday, are sensible and temperate. I speak of my first impressions, which were exceedingly in his favour. He volunteered as modestly as kindly to accompany me in my morning's wanderings; and by Martin's good advice and his aid, arrangements were begun for seeing Guizot (which you must pronounce as the Italian Gui, contrary to the usual French rule, his name being exceptional as well as *Guise*) and the King. I spent a delightful half hour with MacGregor's friend Anisson-Dupéron,[3] and I left my card and letters on those to whom I was addressed. Thus the morning passed; and after a frugal dinner, I went with Martin to hear Rachel as 'Hermione' in Racine's *Andromaque*. She is the best actress I ever saw in tragedy; surpassed or equalled only by Mademoiselle Mars, on whom the earth closed a few days ago. She seemed to act like one possessed; her utterance was inspiration, love, hate, tenderness, revenge, all the passions that can agitate the breast of a fond woman, the torture of love unrecognised, the gentle relenting at

[1] J. L. Martin, Secretary of the U. S. Legation at Paris.

[2] The younger brother of Charles Sumner. He was then thirty years old, and living in Paris.

[3] Director of the Royal Press, and member successively of the Chamber of Deputies and House of Peers.

the slightest transitory hope, the frenzy of seeing another preferred by the man whose faith had been plighted to her, the infinite remorse at the consummation of her vengeance, all flowed from her lips, and impressed themselves on her face, and moved in her eyes and person; so that I joined in the outcries of approbation which followed the religious silence during her acting. Ah! Fanny Kemble! But comparisons are disagreeable. Nothing shall mix itself in my mind with the pure admiration of the actress, who made even Racine's language more beautiful; who expressed all his meaning without exaggeration, and illumined every word of every line she uttered.

"I ran home, where I had received a charming billet from Madame de Circourt; and in a very few moments, as you may believe, was dressed for my evening visit. At her soirée was Mrs. Austin, Mr. and Mrs. Coolidge, Hawtrey the head master of Eton; I shook hands with these—but the Countess Circourt! She speaks English like an Angel, *i. e.*, Anglus; French sounds sweetly from her mouth; she knows German as well as Bunsen. Here I stopped; for I could not venture on Italian, though I once spoke it pretty well. Her manners were delightful. She is the first person I have seen in Europe who had those charming qualities of French society according to the best accounts of it. I kept out of the English set as much as possible; and near her. What did not we talk about! America and London and France and Berlin; the great men of the Revolution; Louis Blanc, and Lamennais; and this wonderful new book of Lamartine: the *History of the*

Girondins. Presently Delavigne[1] came in, with a suite of Frenchmen. At once an introduction. He knew something of Emerson; talked of poetry; of Béranger; of his own movement to procure Béranger's admission to the French Academy; of Béranger himself. Then criticised on his songs, then some remarks almost cynical of the character of the modern press, and of poets and poetry. I could not join in the conversation all the time; for Count Circourt[2] was making little arrangements for me; all kindly considerate, that, as I have but a few days, I may see at once the celebrities of Paris; blind Thamyris, that is Augustin Thierry, whom I am to visit to-morrow night, and after it at Mrs. Austin's to meet, I hope, French people. Lamartine, I am resolved to see; his *Girondins* is a book little read as yet by the higher classes; eminently acceptable to the people; of which the sale will promptly reach 24,000, six or seven thousand having been sold instantly in Paris. Lamennais I shall probably meet; but it is not so certain. His fourth volume of his great work has appeared. His third, which, you remember, relates to art, was praised by the Countess, last night, in good set terms. . . ."

"*April* 4, 1847.

". . . At four and a quarter I went to a rendezvous with M. Guizot. His reception was as cordial as

[1] Presumably Germain Delavigne, dramatist, younger brother of Casimir Delavigne, the poet, who died in 1843.

[2] Of the two brothers Albert and Adolphe, Count Adolphe Circourt became later one of Bancroft's most frequent correspondents, and the translator of portions of his History.

possible. 'You are no stranger to me; your work I have read with the greatest interest. I esteem it the best historical work that has appeared on your side of the water.' 'If it has merit it must be in part due to those among the French whose writings contribute so much to vivify thought in America.' 'How very agreeable, that persons living so many thousand miles apart, learn to appreciate one another, and to point a point of union in the world of intelligence.' 'I am the more glad you take an interest in my pursuits as you can render me essential aid.' 'I shall be most happy to render you every aid in my power,' and so we chatted of the French Revolution and the American; of their different characters; of the influence of France on America; of the Frenchman Calvin; of the aid France gave us in the Revolution. I am to have all facilities; and as the Minister of the Interior came in, a Governor Marcy looking sort of man, I left the ministers of state to their cabinet councils with an engagement to meet M. Guizot again to-morrow.

". . . After dinner I went to Lamartine's[1] reception. He is a tall man, with the manners of the world. His work just published has the greatest success of almost anything that has yet appeared. The third volume was on a table, and is to appear on Monday. At his soirée was M. Ampère[2] who wishes to be elected this week to the Academy; M. Tissot, I think, who is a

[1] Lamartine was then in political opposition to Guizot, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[2] Jean Jacques Ampère, son of the scientist. He was elected to the Academy in 1847.

member; Count Girardin of the old régime, Charles X's Grand Veneur; the Marquis and Marquise de la Grange, who invited me to their soirée to-morrow evening; Coolidge; and my friends the Circourts. Madame Lamartine, who is not thought here a person so distinguished as not to be excelled by a great many, corrects her husband's proof-sheets herself entirely, tells him what pages to rewrite, points out the repetition in the same page of the same word, or the too frequent recurrence of the same phrase; and revises again the revise. Nay, when he has written, the copy of the amanuensis is made for the press from his papers, and madame compares them, and she alone. When Lamartine writes letters she sits by and folds them and he writes almost as fast as she can direct and seal. Here I pause as my paper is at an end. Lamartine writes before breakfast; and writes only after long reflection, and then writes almost as an improvisation with astonishing rapidity."

"*April* 5, 1847.

"My adventures yesterday brought me nearer my goal. In the morning Brodhead's friend Poore[1] came to see me; and I passed an hour or two at his room, looking at his copies of papers for the State of Massachusetts. Then to Cousin. I find my dear philosopher in the inner sanctuary of his immense succession of rooms, with Basani the greatest bookbinder of the age. Our friend has a passion for historical and for beautiful bindings; showed me some which were extremely luxurious; and before dismissing the artist took down

[1] Ben Perley Poore.

a work which was extremely well bound and in perfect order, every volume of it; but Cousin did not like its appearance; and the artist was to bind it anew in a manner suited to the work. This was my first opportunity at seeing the search after the ideal in book binding.

"From Cousin to George Lafayette's. I sat with the good man an hour and a half, and as I rose to go, he insisted on presenting me to his wife, the daughter of Destutt de Tracy. 'I wish she could see you,' said Lafayette. 'She is blind and is waiting a few weeks, when she will have her eyes couched.' Lafayette was dissatisfied with the manner in which Girardin had spoken of his father, and wrote the historian a letter of 'réclamation'; Lamartine answered that in the next edition he would change it; that he regretted it; that he wrote the volume two years ago an had *never* revised it. Such is the temerity of a man who writes history as an improvisation.

"From Lafayette to Guizot *i. e*, Gwizot. By the way Basset is here. 'Where do you live?' In the shówzy dántong (Chaussée d'Anton) emphasising each time the first syllable. Guizot repeated his pleasure in reading the two first volumes of my book. The third he had not read; the two first with great care. He had read much on America, mine was the best. I should have access to everything. Dinner, and after dinner went to Thiers. There were Mignet and Cousin, Thiers and the pure minded, excellent Odilon-Barrot. First a long talk with the charming Mignet. Then a quadrangular chat with Thiers, Cousin and O-B. Oh

you should have seen the vivacity of them all. Thiers hopping up as he spoke, hardly sitting down before he was up again, discussing, asserting, arguing."

"Hotel Windsor, *April* 6, 1847.

". . . Yesterday morning my first place of rendezvous was with Mignet at the archives. He gave me good advice, as well as opens to me every facility; aids and encourages me in my purpose to take nothing on trust; to verify everything by the archives themselves. I find in him not only courtesy and good-will, but the good qualities that come from his own extraordinary merit as an historian and a critic; so that I find a favourer and a friend in the man on whom I so much depend for my opportunities of research.

"After this I went with Count Circourt to see the blind veteran Thierry. He is paralysed in his lower limbs; his nerves are shattered; his eyesight gone; but his mind is as bright as light, and his interest in his pursuit untiring. He knew Lafayette very well. When the general returned in his glory from his first campaign in America, Marie Antoinette herself gave him a welcome. '*Nos bons républicains*,' said she; '*dites moi quelque chose de nos bons républicains*,' little dreaming that America was nearer than Athens and Sparta, or that the promise of Washington was more likely to be followed by results than that of a hero of old time; as if the ocean divided as much as two thousand years. He told another story of Lafayette; that when he visited Berlin, at dinner Frederic quizzed him about his enthusiasm. 'I had a young friend who went up and

down the world, seeking adventures,' said Frederic; 'and do you know what end he came to? He was hanged.'

"I have not yet seen Chateaubriand. But I hope to do so. O'Connell wished to meet him, and he sent him word, he would receive his visit. 'Does not he know,' said the Vicomte, 'that I never go out of the house for anyone but my king?' They began reading to him Lamartine's *Girondins*. After a few pages he bade them stop, saying, '*Il dore la Guillotine*'; a harsh and unjust phrase, but one that will be repeated and remembered. Someone was speaking with him of his life: 'In my youth,' said he, 'I saw Washington and Malesherbes; in my old age I see Louis Philippe and Dupin!! Can you think I wish to continue longer?' . . ."

"*April* 11, *Monday*, 1847.

". . . After this [a call from an American visitor] I went down to the Rue du Temple, a great way off, to the hotel of M. de St. Albin. This is he who introduced Louis Philippe into the Jacobin club; the same who stood out bravely and alone against the mob of Paris, when it came in its fury to break the statue of Malesherbes; an intimate friend of the friends of Franklin; father to M. de St. Albin, the very amiable and liberal member of the chamber of deputies. He was present, as he told me, at the scene when Madame de Staël said to the Emperor Alexander, '*Vous, sire, êtes le meilleur des constitutions.*' '*Moi,*' replied the emperor, '*je ne suis qu'un accident;* the happiness of a people should have a more enduring guarantee'; the best moment in the emperor's life.

"The ascent to his rooms was imposing. The vast escalier made its way up into the hotel of ancient grandeur, ample in its dimensions, carrying you back to the days of Louis XIII. We entered through the vast suite of rooms lined with pictures and came to the saloon where by a large wood fire in a deep, large, old-fashioned fireplace sat in an arm-chair the venerable old man whose memory and strong sense are alike remarkable. His large figure has the commanding air of vigour of will and force of understanding; his eye proclaimed sagacity and clearness of conviction; everything about him testified to his integrity. His sons were about him. On the opposite side of him, my eye soon rivetted on a charming young person, in a high dress, covering neck and shoulders almost to the chin, the dress a plaid silk; her mouth and countenance apt to smile; her eye bright but mild and beaming with the gentlest expression; her air as simple as possible, but of high breeding and perfect culture. Now in France, they never present to young persons; but she was so modest, so graceful, evidently so full of merit, I said to myself, let me see if I cannot, before I go, find out the sound of her voice, and get some measure of her mind.

"The old gentleman talked with us delightfully; abounding in picturesque anecdote, sketches of the men of the revolution, of Danton and Robespierre, which last he thinks a monster, as I do. 'We have yet two moods of mind to pass through in France,' said he, 'Robespierreism and Bonapartism. We shall get through both.' Presently his wife came in, a person much younger than himself, and the charming daughter for some

reason left the room. Soon after we proceeded to our morning's work. The painter David bequeathed to M. St. Albin his portraits of the revolution: there was Danton, St. Just, Mirabeau, and so many more; Charlotte Corday, painted in prison before her execution; the horrible, hateful, half-crazed Marat; the singular Camille Desmoulins; but most remarkable of all, Robespierre himself in his pie coat, with nicely tied cravat, very spruce, not dandyish, but neat and nice and precise; the selfish, envious, hating and hateful creature, with a nature as incapable of respecting abilities superior to his own as —— himself. We went through these rooms, which were lined to the ceiling with pictures; such a portrait of Ninon de l'Enclos at twenty-five, by Mignard. Such of the Pompadour, but vastly less beautiful was she; of statesmen and priests; of the sublime Molière; of so many and pictures of excellent artists. But we gave attention to those marvellous ones of the French Revolution.

"Then the autographs. A letter of Napoleon from Italy to Barras on public business, duly signed; and a post-scriptum: '*Je suis au désespoir; ma femme ne m'aime plus; elle a des amants qui la retiennent à Paris. Je maudisse toutes les femmes, et j'embrasse tous mes bons amis.*'

"Then the *vieillard* sat down in a chair in the room and began telling of the men of the revolution; and Ro[bespierre]'s autograph was produced. It is the proclamation to the citizens, ordering an insurrection; written in the Hôtel de Ville, and signed already by several of his associates of the Committee of Safety. He began to

sign and had written Ro just as the pistol struck his jaw, rendered him speechless and powerless. The blood from the wound spurted upon the paper and the clotted drops stick upon it yet."

"12 *April*, 1847.

"Where was it I stopped in my account of Sunday? I suppose I told you how I contrived to begin conversation with the charming young person I told you of? How we stayed talking with her and her father till dinner-time, making a visit of almost three hours? How beautifully she painted? How sweetly she lisped English? How angel-like she smiled; and how her eyes beamed in a way quite peculiar to France and Paris! At last we bade adieu, and tore ourselves away; but the good creature, to whom we had bidden good-by and who had curtsied her farewell glance to us, came tripping after us like a good child as she is, to show still another wonder that lay in the antechamber.

"In the evening at nine I made my second visit to the Tuileries. The royal circle this time was graced with the very charming Princess de Nemours,[1] dressed as pinkly as possible; the bloom of her cheeks excelling that of her dress and even of the flowers. The King did not by any means have so much to say as before, but was agreeable, talking with us perhaps ten minutes. Then I went to Thiers[2] (having spent a full hour in the royal circle, where by the way I met Count de Bacourt

[1] Louis Philippe's second son, the Duc de Nemours, had married a duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

[2] At this time a leader in the opposition to Guizot.

and Baron de Barante) and finished the evening there. This time he was delightful, and gave descriptions of the battle of Wagram and of Rivoli; the last he described inimitably. . . ."

Under April 1 there is an entry in the diary· "Evening 8½ at the Tuileries." Since the letter just quoted refers to an earlier visit at which the King talked at greater length, there seems sufficient reason to believe that a manuscript memorandum endorsed, "Conversation with Louis Philippe, 1847," has to do with the April 1 interview. The presumption is the stronger since no allusion to another interview in 1847 appears. In this record the reader will see at once that Mr. Bancroft attempted usually to set down the very words of the King, spoken as they were in the first person. The most significant portions of the memorandum follow:

"England talks of making conquests. Let her look at her own course in India. I remember meeting the old Warren Hastings at Lord [ ] in England. He said that England had done wrong, that they should have been contented with Bengal and establishments on the coast, and not have extended their conquests into the interior. Had they stayed there, they would have had all. Now their conquests are a burden to them. Possessions gained by conquests are all bad. I have no opinion."

"We must ride out the storm. We rode it out in 1836 in the question of Romish intervention; again in 1840 in the Syrian question, and now we must do the same.

We shall weather the storm now as we did then. It is but doing what we have done twice before."

"They say they will not restore the *entente cordiale* till they receive satisfaction as they call it. They never will receive it. I never will give it them. And if I were willing, the French nation would not suffer it.

"*Louis Philippe and Franklin*

"I remember Franklin. I was present as a boy when Franklin was introduced to my mother. The picture of the scene is to be seen now in one of the apartments of the Palais Royal. I am painted in it in one corner as a child beating a drum."

"*Treaty of Utrecht*

"It was the English who sued for peace and most needed [it]. Marlborough, to be sure, wished to continue war; for the benefits to be derived from it. But the English ministry needed peace and sought for it. There never was such a thing thought of, as excluding every descendant of a whole family from the succession. Nobody could have done that. Nobody had a right to propose it. Nobody could have made any such renunciation. A man may renounce for himself; he cannot for every member of it in every future generation. The object held in view was, the prevention [of] the crown of France and Spain coming to the same person. That was all.[1] Have you seen the pamphlet written

[1] An obvious allusion to the marriage of the Infanta to the Duke of Montpensier, fifth son of Louis Philippe, in 1845.

here by [ ]? It is very good, and contains a full statement of the case, only it is too long. You, Mr. Martin, must get it for Mr. Bancroft. He understands this subject, and should read what Mr. [ ] has written about it.

"I do not wish to govern Spain."

"Himself and M. Guizot

"Lord Normanby[1] said once to me one day soon after his arrival as minister, that he understood M. Guizot was not acceptable to me. Put that out of your head, I replied to him (and as he spoke he held out his two forefingers closely together), M. Guizot and I are as thick as two fingers. Thiers and those people had got round Lord Normanby, and had persuaded him that Guizot had not my confidence, and wished to supplant them. M. Thiers and his friends cannot come into power. I would not have them. The parliament, I mean the French Parliament (so he called the chambers) would not have them, and if they got into power they would not be able to retain it long."

"Of Spain

"I wish no conquests. I don't think well of conquests. What if we had Belgium and Savoy, it would only be so many departments, so many deputies, and a body all the more difficult to transact business. There are enough of them now. I don't think conquests of any advantage. I hope you may not find it so with re-

[1] British Minister at Paris.

gard to Texas. I do not wish to govern Spain. I wish there were two Pyrenees instead of one, and that were as high as possible; only I cannot have Spain in a hostile attitude."

"*Balearic Isles*

"They talk of our wanting the Balearic Isles. It is the most arrant nonsense ever devised. What do we want of the Balearic Isles, when we hold Toulon? They talk of our wishing to make the Mediterranean a French lake. How can that possibly enter into any man's head? The English have Gibraltar, Malta and Corfu. How then can anybody think of making the Mediterranean a French lake? You call it a pond, I think (added with a sneer). [One sentence on margin illegible.]"

. . . . . .

"(To Lord Palmerston's disposition to control his policy he avowed his resolute opposition.) Here I stand, (assuming an attitude of a man taking a firm position, putting his arms to his side, and holding his head erect,) I am immovable. I will not stir a step. I am planted on a rock. There is no power in Europe that will find it for its advantage to interfere with it. No one will be able to interrupt the tranquillity of Europe. I wanted a cordial understanding with England. I wished it. I was ready to give up everything for it. I could not permit myself to sit still and acquiesce in the Coburg's marrying the Queen of Spain. I said, let them settle it among themselves. I was ready to offer England everything if they would have agreed

to promote the marriage of the Duke of Montpensier to the Infanta. I was willing to wait till the Queen had children, only it must be in the certain assurance to me of the marriage."

On April 17 Mr. Bancroft returned to London. In September he paid a brief visit to the Continent with his wife, establishing his children at school in Switzerland and spending a few unrecorded days in Paris. It was on the 18th of December that he set forth on his next expedition of research, affording him nearly six weeks of Paris on the very eve of the Revolution, which, in spite of the assurance of Louis Philippe, was about "to interrupt the tranquillity of Europe."

"Monday night and Tuesday morning,
"20 *and* 21 *December*, 1847.

"After getting a little in order in my very small box, I went, dear wife, quite early to the State Paper Office. I saw at once M. [blank] who is a great friend of the Pageots;[1] and made my arrangements for beginning my work, and seeing Mignet for this morning. I begged to go right to work without any delay; and they were good enough to interpose but that one morning of my announcement of myself. Quick attention and kind. Books of papers handed out to me freely for me to make extracts and copies and to go on again to new ones, as fast as my own diligence can take me, with no delays from the hesitance of others. I then went to call on

[1] Alphonse Joseph Yvet Pageot was French Minister at Washington, 1842–1848.

Mr. Rush,[1] who was polite and amiable and cordial, living with simplicity; not able to speak, or to write, or to read French. · Guizot speaks English; but what if there were to be a change in the ministry? . . . Cousin,[2] too, I had the good fortune to find at home; and he was full of Switzerland, the minister and a greater person. Lamartine he thinks a poet and no statesman. The Law and Order Party here govern through fear of radicalism; he thought that Lamartine had done wrong by strengthening the radical cause, and in increasing the alarm. Power in France now, such was his theory, is with the *classe moyenne:* (which by the way is not quite true;) and the way to proceed according to his programme is to persuade calmly the middling class to look favourably on moderate reforms as useful to themselves; and next, to make them fear, that the present extreme measures will infallibly give to the radical party strength to accomplish as well as disposition to undertake a revolution. But all lovers of order now frighten people with the red flags of the republic and the name of Robespierre. As to present politics, the younger branch of the Bourbons never attempted to do towards Switzerland, the natural defence of France, what the *branche ainée* did towards constitutional Spain in 182–, with this difference, that the elder branch was urged on to its undertaking by all the powers of legitimist Europe; but this time, France urged on the other powers and seemed impatient of delay. All agree that the next session will be excessively interesting; and that Thiers and Barrot will

[1] Richard Rush, U. S. Minister at Paris, 1847–1849.

[2] Victor Cousin was then Minister of Public Instruction.

at once begin opposition under better auspices than ever. What sort of a man is O–Barrot? *Il est un très brave homme,* but there is not the most perfect identity of views between him and Thiers. The opposition is heterogeneous, (I add this) and after all, Guizot may not be so near his end as some people have imagined. By the way, I must add, that O–Barrot has just returned from his beautiful succession of reform banquets.

"Leaving Cousin, I bought a hat; and then with my new chapeau, went to see Louis Blanc. He has published a second volume of his history of the French Revolution; and is finishing it as fast as possible. He says the *mot* now is *organisation du Travail;*[1] all other watchwords in France are defunct. He thinks the debates in the Chambers will end in nothing at all of any consequence. The King is to him [remainder of line blank in MS.] Thiers is an imperialist under a monarchy. Thiers was the author of the laws of September, which Guizot in the cabinet opposed. Guizot is more liberal than his rival though he would do anything to retain power. Thiers is a Bonapartist, as thoroughly given to Napoleonism as any man in France; thinks himself a little Napoleon; Guizot retains from his old pursuits a leaning to liberalism. As to revolutions, men made them without intending it. The Chamber under Charles X, even after the Louvre was taken, did not wish to depose Charles, but only to have the ordinances recalled. So Lafitte himself told him; for it seems, Lafitte himself was one of his sources in his *Hist. de Dix*

[1] Louis Blanc's book, *De l'Organisation du Travail,* had appeared in 1840.

Ans; said nothing now but composing and moderate measures on the part of the governing power can prevent a revolution. L. Blanc is to come and call on me some morning before my state paper hour, and seemed *empressé* to do so. . . ."

"22 *December*, 1847.

"Is it Tuesday night, or Wednesday the 22nd? It is past 12 o'clock, dear wife; and it is safest perhaps, to indite my letter to you now. The 22nd, what a day for us all; when those who built on the Rock of Ages landed on the rock of Plymouth. To-day at eleven, I called by appointment on M. Mignet; and I found him amiability itself. 'Sit down,' said he; and telling me how immensely rich the archives here are, he gave me counsel how to make the best use of my time. 'Take notes, when those suffice; if a short sentence is wanted copy it; if whole documents or longer extracts mark them, and I will have them done for you.' And then this gentlest and loveliest of keepers of archives said, 'See I have had all this copied for you'; and gave me a pile that made my heart leap for joy. The good turn he had done me was worth a week's work, and put me ahead at once. Then ringing for the clerk (M. Dumont had already been with him and welcomed me), he said to the clerk, 'give Mr. Bancroft any book he may ask for, and conduct him to the room he occupied before. Our hours,' he added, 'are from 11 to 4.' So you see I gain one hour beyond the usage of London.

". . . Rose Chéri was to play; but I turned my back upon her attractions; read till near nine; then went to

see Thiers. He was in his salon, amidst his wife, his wife's mother, his wife's sister and a coterie, Mignet being of the party. Thiers insisted that Peel had lost ground the last year, that his bill of 1844 was an absurdity; that there was nobody in France ignorant enough to have proposed such a thing; that paper-money is an abomination; that restraints on a bank *de province* might pass unheeded; but to tie up the discretion and power of action of a great bank was an absurdity; that you put wadding around the foreheads of children to prevent them breaking their pates; but to do so to a full grown man is ridiculous. Then, too, he found fault with the repeal of the corn laws; and was troubled with a want of sincerity of convictions in English statesmen. The present ministry he thinks likely to stand; because there is none other possible. Peel in his view has lost reputation and has lost his following. But he predicts great distress to the agricultural interest, and contests in England of unforeseen bitterness. Many came and went. I tried to talk with Madame Thiers. It is difficult to do so consecutively. Her conversation is, if not monosyllabic, at least sententious. Her sister talks more: her mother is one well versed in the use of her tongue. I find the language no great obstacle to a share in the chat of the evening. Afterward M. Thiers talked with me about Switzerland, but he will hardly be able to overthrow the ministry. As I went he followed me to the door, saying he is at home every evening in the week except Wednesday and Thursday, and said everything that was kind by way of inviting me to come often. So I bade good-night to

the imperialist historian who is no free trader, and has no tendencies to republicanism. . . ."

"PARIS, 23 *December*, 1847.

"Yesterday, dear wife, has come to an end. I took another dose of Louis Blanc's *French Revolution*. He is not right. Immersed in his one idea, his heart does not expand to what is beautiful and touching in other situations than those of which he is the apologist. I make up my mind, that he gives no fair version of Marie Antoinette. Louis XVI he seems to think a stupid imbecile. . . .

"Four or five elaborate despatches and communications from Mr. Rush at last put me in the way of making a visit last night at the Tuileries. It was all I did. At $8\frac{3}{4}$ we passed through the immensely long Corridores and arrived at a room crowded almost as much as at a London minister's reception. There were Dukes and Duchesses, Montebello[1] and Decazes,[2] there was an old man near 90 whom the Duke Decazes pointed out to me and whose name I have forgotten; the King was suffering from a cold and did not appear. The Queen was the more amiable, or at least was very amiable. She and the members of the Royal Family were seated, and the visitors passed behind their chairs, bowing and speaking to each one of them. The familiarity of approach was quite as great as the approach to persons in

[1] In 1847 Napoléon Auguste duc de Montebello was made Minister of Marine.

[2] From 1834 to 1848 Elie duc de Decazes was *grand referendaire*, chief officer of the seals for the House of Peers.

society but little known. There was the quiet suppression of everything like excitement, otherwise things went on as in any other soirée. I spoke with the Queen, Princess Adelaide,[1] the Duchess de Montpensier, who is agreeable, though not handsome, has light in her eye, and a mild pleasant smile; and with the Duchess de Nemours, whom I thought this time not quite so good looking as she seemed to me last spring. With the Duc de Montpensier I had a very pleasant little chat. He has an open countenance, gay, almost frolicsome, and seems not eminently gifted, but an amiable companion. The Duc de Nemours, too, was in the room. . . .

"After remaining a little while, we took our departure, Rush inviting me to go with him to a soirée from which I excused myself. I came home, wishing to keep quiet, and thinking the palace enough for one night. But as the King did not show himself I shall have to go again. . . ."

"PARIS, 29 *December*, 1847.

"I allowed myself yesterday, dear wife, to be called off from my papers for an hour or two to be present at the *séance royale*. The king is very much hated by the masses; and, sad to tell, none are allowed to be near as he passes to the chambers. He moves thro' streets closed against all others and lined with soldiers. I escorted Miss Rush to the box for diplomatic wives and other attachés. My charming Hanoverian minister was there, and I sat near her. Madame Fleischman . . . pointed out to me the ministers and

[1] Younger sister of Louis Philippe.

marshals and chief deputies. There is no present indication of a change of ministry, though it may come. The King was well received by the representatives of the *haute bourgeoisie*. The Peers deem it inconsistent with their dignity to shout *vive le roi*.

"The King was too hoarse to read well, though he exerted himself. As a reader he is '*not a circumstance*' to Queen Victoria; but a promised reduction of postage and of salt duties won some applause. On the whole, the separation between the King and France, between the Pouvoir and the people is very great. The speech promises only a regard for the moral and material interests of the people; and does not at all intimate the right of political advancement. I doubt if such a system can be permanent. The moral power and physical strength and intelligence of the disfranchised is too great. But the opposition to government is anarchical; and all the French seem to unite on nothing but love of glory.

"Last evening I went to spend an hour at M. Thiers. He was of course busy with his political friends, and I could not see him or converse with him. But he had not the manner of a man who expects immediate triumph; and as he is not a champion of popular liberty, I do not think he enjoys the necessity of continued and perpetual opposition. He is more in the condition of a child who wishes to get to the head of his class, than of a statesman wishing to sway the interests and policy of his country by the acquisition of power. . . ."

"Paris, 31 *December*, 1847.

"But if, dear Wife, La Place had written of the

mecanics [sic] of humanity, of life in its wonderful displays in man and nature and the race, he would have needed his hypothesis. They say that Voltaire declared the only fit commentary to Racine would be to write, Beautiful, beautiful, most beautiful at the bottom of each page. Each page of history may begin and end with Great is God and marvellous are his doings among the children of men; and I defy a man to penetrate the secrets and laws of events without something of faith. He may look on and see as it were the twinkling of stars and planets and measure their distances and motions; but the life of history will escape him. He may pile a heap of stones, he will not get at the soul. This is my commentary.

"Humboldt went on pouring out anecdote after anecdote. Then he dwelt on our relations to Mexico. He himself you know is a Mexican by adoption. The Mexicans he thought gained their independence before they were ripe for it, and without a sufficient struggle. Old Spain had no liberal institutions except those which the Roman traditions had given to their municipalities. The freedom of the Communes existed. So in Mexico, when the central power of the king disappeared there was a want of union, though there was the city of Vera Cruz, the city of Mexico, etc., etc. For us to come down and take all Mexico he deemed impossible or rather an unwise design, but all the north to latitude 35 he thought we ought certainly [to] have. Such opinions so strongly expressed he could not publish; for he holds a situation at the Prussian court and is, moreover, a Mexican. But such are his opinions. But against our

possessing tropical countries he gave a warning. Besides he detests slavery and holds the very strongest opinions against its extension. For all this, he regards Cuba as the natural extension of Florida, and that, therefore, one day it must come to the power, of which Florida is a possession. . . ."

[P. S.]

"Mad. Adelaide died this morning at 3."

"*New Year's Day*, 1848.

". . . It is impossible for my days to pass with more uniformity, or more to my mind. I am getting just what I needed: only there is so much of it; and yet it is all so attractive that I wish there were more. The death of Madame Adelaide throws the court of course into deepest mourning. She was the King's bosom friend and counsellor. There was no one, it is said, to whom he opened his thoughts so fully, and in whose affection he more completely reposed. Besides: the political effect is not inconsiderable. She was younger than the King and yet of a good old age. It was only last week that I saw her at the Tuileries, apparently as well as usual. Parties here are becoming very much embittered, and Guizot, in the King's speech, has made the King involve himself in a contest of which the end cannot be foreseen. The campaign of banquets of which Cousin spoke, is attacked outright; and by the necessity of the case, the discussion on the Address in reply to the speech will involve that attack, not less than the policy *towards Switzerland*. Odilon-Barrot will not allow the reports which he has

showed to be denounced as the fountains of rebellion or the evidence of a love of anarchy. France has been governed so long by the appeal to its fears of republicanism and Robespierre, that it is beginning to reason calmly upon the subject. But perhaps another generation must be waited for; the present opposition is scarcely united in anything. Some are for free trade; but Thiers is a most thorough protectionist, equal to the worst whig in the worst days of the tariff mania with us. Some are for the extension of the right of suffrage; but here again opinions are divided as to the extent and the principle of the proposed reform. One member explained to me his views, that all who are 'independent' shall vote; and who are they? Another wishes to emancipate men of letters and members of learned professions; while the Government sets its face against all political changes and here in France, in the hollow of a wave, asks the sea to [be] immutably still.

"I gave you in one of my letters my criticisms on the French Opera, at which I give you leave to laugh. Last night I whiled away an hour or two at the Gymnase to hear Rose Chéri. Am I growing insensible? and dull? I was not enchanted. She is a good actress, not one of the best; and had none of the charm for which I was prepared to find her distinguished. I never should think of sending anyone to see her as a matter of duty. . . ."

[P. S.]

"Guizot did not receive last night and to-day the King does not receive the *Corps Diplomatique*."

"*Sunday*, 2 *January*, 1848.

"Excellent, dear Wife, is the message of the President, which I found in the *Daily News* received this morning. It is full of good sense and a tenacity which cannot fail to succeed. I have spent the morning in reading it carefully, and I approve of it heartily. It has put everything else out of my head; and I have forgotten Paris and London in thinking of America. Winthrop's appointment as speaker is well eno'; perhaps the best selection that could have been made from that side; he is personally unobjectionable. But his appointments of committees are in the highest degree of a partisan character. Compare Mr. Clay's manifesto with Mr. Polk's message. Can the country [doubt] which is the wisest, the ablest, the most suited to the times? It is impossible to be more logical than is our good president in his whole argument and policy; and all reasoning *a priori* must fail or his policy must predominate. I regard the loss of power on the part of the Democracy in the House as unfortunate for the time, but as altogether favourable to the ultimate ascendency of our party.

"Here the death of Mad. Adelaide has interrupted the festivities and ceremonies of the season. There was no gathering of the *Corps Diplomatique* yesterday; and no prospect of any immediately. The presentations, which for Americans were to have reached the number of 100 or more, are, to the great damage of all who had bought or hired finery for the occasion, postponed or abandoned. Court balls are given over; shopkeepers in despair. The Princes Joinville[1] and Montpensier

[1] Prince Joinville, third son of Louis Philippe.

inherit the departed one's estates, which yield a revenue of 3,000,000 francs, quite a fortune for an old maid. The Duchess d'Orleans[1] is thought not to regret the departure of her aunt; for Adelaide always feared and thwarted the natural influence over Louis Philippe of the mother of the heir to the throne. Adelaide was one of the few survivors of the old school of French women; a *Voltairienne*, not troubled with religious scruples, fond of doing good to her friends, but otherwise quite *méchante*. . . ."

"*January* 7, 1848.

"What is the world coming to? You are all frightened out of your wits lest M. Guizot with sword and regimentals, giving up his career in the French Chamber, should come over to England with an army? Fie for shame. The Great Duke is growing old. Years ago Gen. Harrison, then Senator from Ohio, was dining at Sir Charles Vaughan's, and insisted like Wellington now on the possibility of invading England successfully. Sir Charles heard awhile with the courtesy which an Englishman always has in his own house or in his own country, but at last, got too much annoyed to remain silent any longer. 'The channel,' said he, emphasizing the l in a way you and I could not do; '*the* channel; I could step across it. I could spit across it. We'll ferry them over and then beat them.'

"Thursday at 5, I went to see Amédée Thierry. He was reading the proofs of the 4th volume of his history

[1] Duchess d'Orléans, Princess Heléne of Mecklenberg, widow of Louis Philippe's eldest son.

of France under the Romans. He sent me that message, which you know of; and it was so kind and civil the Circourts thought I owed him a visit. His manner is modest. Ushered into his room by a maid, two tallow candles followed, as the articles of luxury and show adorning the mantelpiece. Presently his wife came and joined us; pleasing very, daughter of one of the greatest surgeons Paris ever had, and I believe only daughter and even only child, but her father dying left so many debts that her fortune was not large. I sat with Thierry till I thought it was 6 but his clock was too fast. 'And may I ask,' said I, 'if M. Th. takes you to counsel as to what he writes?' She stammered a negative; but he said the question is to be answered affirmatively. He is to give me his third volume; so I shall buy the two first for you to read; he has been so singularly civil and obliging, and has shown himself so very much my friend —as I told you in two of my former letters. . . ."

"9 *Janvier*, 1848.

"Thiers though fifty years old, dear wife, . . . rises at five o'clock every morning, toils till twelve, breakfasts, makes researches, goes to the Chambers, attends to politics, and in the evening always receives his friends except on Wednesday and Thursday when he attends his wife to the Opera and the Académie. I shall bring home his history *du Consulat* and *de l'Empire*. It is a magnificent work and as you set up for a critic of historians, you must read that. Yet Thiers at present is not likely to become minister. You may tell our friend who spoke to you of Patria, that Guizot is not and has

not been in any present danger of losing his place. What may come in the dim distance, time only can reveal. But an acquaintance here in Paris with the state of parties shows the want of union and clear purpose in the opposition; and Guizot is not only the ablest man in the Chamber of Deputies; he is also not less liberal than anybody who would be likely to take his place in the present state of opinion and parties.

"Yesterday I was at my papers till near dinner; I got your letters by the despatch bearer. . . . After dinner at a table d'hôte, I went to the Préfet's. He has magnificent apartments at the Hôtel de Ville; Louis Philippe is hardly so well lodged. The first person of my acquaintance whom I met on entering was Alexander von Humboldt. 'You wished to know Arago?[1] he is by my side'; and there stood that tall stately man, majestically great, well and robustly made, more than six feet high; with a noble head, and every way an imposing presence; the very man in a revolution to command an impassioned crowd, at its time of peace to guide the progress of science. My Washington experiences made us acquainted at once; but just as we were talking of telescopes and stars, M. Humboldt reminded him they have another engagement. There were at the Préfet's Lord Normanby, Baron Rothschild, several diplomates, ministers and functionaries; a great crowd. I went off to M. Anisson's. There was the duc de Broglie and a good many more. After talking with the

[1] Dominique François Arago, physicist, who was soon to become minister, both of war and marine, under the Provisional Government.

Duke, M. Anisson introduced me to Rémusat. Now Rémusat is just one of those I was most eager to know; for Rémusat you remember wrote Lafayette's life, and being himself a grandson and great-grandson of Vergennes, married Lafayette's granddaughter. I pounced at once upon Vergennes. But he thought there were no memorials of him except at the Archives. He introduced me [to] his wife who is a pleasing person, very. Presently, Baron de Barante came in: he who is the author of the reply to the King's speech to be reported to-morrow, as well as the historian of Burgundy. The evening passed delightfully. 'I heard your name mentioned to-day,' said Rémusat to me; but I made no inquiries, leaving that for hereafter, if need should be. I finished my evening at the graceful, amiable, lovely Duchess de Rauzan. Now don't think of a pretty young woman, but of a person full middle-aged, of the quietest, huddling twenty people into the smallest room so quickly that everyone had room enough, and all were near for little groups of conversation. The Circourts were here, Madame Radzevil too was here, and tells me that Emma Schlippenbach married Jelf, an English clergyman. Ask Bunsen about it; for if the lovely Countess Emma von Schlippenbach is in England, I must see her; and see what changes five and twenty years can make in one, who that long time ago, was the grace of social life in Berlin. But the lion of the evening for me was Berryer, the veritable legitimist Berryer, a man who in his appearance reminded me a little of Webster, a dark complexion, a large head, a bulky frame, but his head not so large as Webster's; nor his eye so big; nor the

white of his eye so frightfully white; nor his neck quite so long nor his stature quite so tall. He told me, that Chateaubriand is all but gone: he is too feeble to stand. His one arm has suffered from paralysis; of the other he uses but two fingers. He has less command of words. In short he scarcely sees any one.

"Good-by. Be a good woman."

A few days after the writing of this letter Bancroft returned to London. In the next month, February, 1848, the Revolution took place. With unusual interest, therefore, he must have returned to Paris in April.

"Paris, *Jeudi le* 20 *Avril*, 1848.

"Yesterday my first great deeds were to bespeak your gloves and exchange your boots, slippers and shoes; the Pells being absent this took me in the Boulevards. Next I resumed my work at the Archives. Then a stroll with Martin through the Tuileries. I left cards on the ministers. I met Lamartine in the street who gave me a rendezvous for seven; and I finished the evening at the Théâtre de la République.

"Never were streets like these of Paris. You hear at every corner the shouts of urchins selling the newspapers, which are now as cheap in Paris as in New York, more abundant, and more readable. Every shade of opinion is represented and advocated with boldness. The Bourgeoisie have recovered courage and like the republic. A republic or an abyss, no other choice, a republic or civil war: a republic or the ruin of France. They who liked Louis Philippe most did so as the

representative of order and security; and as he failed they own themselves mistaken and join the clubs and go heartily for the republic. The clubs are *not* terrible. They are so numerous that they neutralise each other. None have a preponderance. I have no fear but what the elections will take place quietly, and will give a well-intentioned representative body, moderate in opinions, free from excess of passion. As to the forms they may adopt I have more doubt. Nor am I prepared to judge a great nation lightly. This is truly a wonderful people, having ideals, character, courage, waywardness and inventions of its own; and I am not prepared to say, that they are certainly wrong, because they do not in all things imitate us. Of one thing be certain. The socialist elections have no more sway here than in New York. The whole national guard which is now the whole people is in favour of order as well as republicanism; and life and property are as safe here now as in any part of the world. It is credit that totters; property is secure. There is not a dream of confiscation; no more thought of attacking property as such or dividing it than with us. The danger I fear is, a too simple form of government; but none can foresee that. You know the old French opinion, it was that of Turgot, was in favour of one chamber; and the recollection of the late Chamber of Peers does not recommend a second. So the idea of a Senate is not so universally acceptable as one would wish. For unity in the Executive, a President, everybody inclines; so Cousin told me, but a president vis-à-vis one chamber, will occupy a difficult position.

"The garde mobile is the most comical set of capital

young soldiers that you can conceive of; bright-eyed, gay, young, in frocks or blouses, full of spirit, of fidelity, and a courage which is the hilarity of youth. I don't believe braver troops could be enrolled; but they are certainly in strange contrast with the troops of princes, who spend their time in inventing caps and improving uniforms. The streets swarm with these new soldiers; but think of our militia at home and you have them nearly, except that I never saw men in our companies in blue frocks, or with that sort of garb, that showed it pretty plainly to be their only one. The gamins de Paris are some of them mere boys, still enrolled already in the garde mobile. A gamin is a Parisian boy, born and bred, with dark eyes that flash with light, with a gay good-humoured expression in his face, ready wit, civility of manner combined with the gift of repartee; poor, honest, and fearless, and most unlike anything you see in London.

"At Lamartine's[1] I met the Marquise de [ ] one of the most charming of the Faubourg St. Germain; more full of cheerfulness than of old. I sat in a triangle with them. The sums, said the marquise, that are paid to the *travailleurs* are less than the expenses of the civil list. It is only spending on famished labourers what was wasted on a king. And she made the computation of so much per day for the labourers and so much for the monarch; the one expense being of charity and transient, the other having been a steady and increasing burden. Lamartine spoke warmly and most explicitly on the subject of property. He is resolved that all interests shall

[1] Under the Provisional Government Lamartine became Minister of Foreign Affairs.

be respected and secured. Tell Miss Berry he scorns the idea as to the French Rentes of anything but maintaining them sacredly. Over and over he repeated that that was the fixed policy; and certainly France is rich eno' to make good all his promises. And you know no nation in the world hates bankruptcy, public or private, like the French. Lamartine is the man of all parties. Cousin says of him, he is now the anchor of safety. He speaks of the success of the republic as certain however it may go with him personally. 'If I fall they will avenge me.' But his courage is his security. Madame Lamartine is rather enthusiastic about her husband. I told her, that I who knew her had contradicted the stories of her deserting Paris; for said I, I knew if there was danger you would have shared it with your husband. This she liked; and while I was willing to praise Lamartine for what he has done and is doing, she seemed to think that there was nothing to be done in the world, that he could not do; and that he would display military genius as readily as eloquence at the *tribune*, prudence in council, or power of organising a republic. Indeed, the power he has shown in moderating selfish passions and swaying the people is something unexampled.

"I was late in getting to the theatre. The play was Lucrèce,[1] a tame one; but it has the deliverance of Rome, and the cry of *Plus de Rois!* But the lines applauded most were

c'est peu de songer à detruire
Si l'on ne songe encor comme on veut reconstruire.

[1] By F. Ponsard. First produced in 1843, the year in which Rachel first acted Phèdre.

Then in her Roman dress, Rachel came forward to sing the Marseillaise,[1] exceeding everything that I have ever heard or anticipated. She seemed an angel not a sibyl. There was an infinite sweetness mingled with the strains, blending the gentlest emotions of social life with the summons to the battle-field. You could hear the ferocious hordes in the distance, and take arms to protect the children whom you clasp and the companions you cherish.

> Tremblez, tyrans, et vous perfides,
> L'opprobre de tous les partis,

was uttered not fiercely, but with the profoundest scorn that pure patriotism could feel, but when she recited the children's strophe, every word went to the soul. I could not have believed that eight lines could mean so much, and at the conclusion,

> Nous aurons le sublime orgueil
> De les venger ou de les suivre,

it seemed as if the brave little one were going up to heaven in your presence.

"Paris, 22 *April*, 1848.

"To-morrow is election day; and a more quiet, unimpassioned preparation for election I never knew. There is no extreme excitement; but rather the universal desire of getting a good Assembly. Violence is out of vogue

[1] It was during a performance of "Lucrèce," in the winter of 1848, that Rachel gave the first of her wonderful renderings of the Marseillaise.

and terror so much below par that it is laughed at. Everybody feels safe; and everybody strong. The rich wish freedom that they themselves may be secure; the poor, that they may exercise their share of political power. All accept the republic, the great majority as an affair of judgment, not of passion. The conquest of liberty has calmed passion. Paris, last winter when I was here, was more rocked by political storms, than now. The clubs have nothing formidable. Judge by this. You must have a ticket to get in. They are not crowded, and do little else than hear the *professions de foi* of the candidates. In a word, I have only to repeat, that it is not the fault of the French people, if they do not get a good republic. Yesterday was so quiet, I passed the whole morning till 5¼ at the Archives, and I shall do the same to-day. After dining yesterday I strolled to and fro, to a club-room or two. They were as quiet as our ward meetings. The Boulevards had their gay, cheerful crowds as usual. I fear nothing but defects in the organization of the government consequent on the want of republican experience.

"Madame Circourt was in Berlin during the night of horrors, and showed wonderful self-possession and courage. She was for three days and nights in the palace, nursing the wounded. Things in Germany are in a very unsettled state. France will get organised first.

"The great event of Sunday last, and the review on Thursday prove that physical strength is on the side of order; that the coming republic will be under the safeguard of the organised people, and not at the mercy of a mob.

"At home Boston is frightened out of its wits. Mr. H. G. Otis thinks Louis Philippe a deeply injured man; Mr. Webster condemns the revolution in toto, as the work of communists and anarchists. The *Daily Advertiser* is alarmed. . . ."

"PARIS, 23 *April*, 1848.

". . . I wonder at Pell's idle fears. To say that a country can pass from one form of government to another without some agony is an absurdity: but the French government is making the transition with the least possible confusion. The interruption of business is not greater than with us at the epoch of the last suspension of specie payment; not so great as it was after the war on the return to specie payments. As to life, I never felt safer in my life; as to property, I find everybody free from every apprehension of pillage. No tendency to pillage has marked any part of the movement. As to elections, they are preparing and going forward much more quickly than at any disputed election of ours. France is much less convulsed than we shall be at home in August and September and October.

"A constitution should be the representation of national character: to translate ours into French is not enough. The members of the Provisional Government are busy at work, studying ours. Crémieux[1] has ordered everything he could find: manuscripts and commentaries. Lamartine is diligently inquiring about us.

[1] Adolphe Crémieux, Minister of Justice under the Provisional Government.

But Lamartine's strong side is his instinctive knowledge of his own country, and his power of adapting the forms of his thoughts to their tastes and passions. He guides the French people by ribands. His education and habits of life have made him more familiar with the sentiment of democracy, than with the forms by which it is best organised. The book in the Girondins on foreign affairs is the weakest of all. But he knows the French people; and those about him will get all the conditions of republicanism. As to the labour question, the results of Blanc's nonsense promise to be noble. The government present and future does and must toil for the amelioration of the labouring classes. Heretofore, heavy taxes rested on consumption, which burdened the poor and, as you know, operated as a poll-tax. This is changing. No more heavy tax on salt; no octroi at the city gates on meat; the tax on wines, changed to an *ad valorem*. This is done already. The coming assembly will and must provide for universal public education. The labourer feels that Blanc's theory defeats itself: they will give it up for something else: for something better, rational and positive. I by no means underestimate the difficulty of solving these questions. They are not so difficult here as in some other country I could name. On the whole, having been among those to take alarm if there were cause for it, I am not alarmed, and do not find others are. The moderation of people is marvellous, and will be rewarded. Pageot might have retained his post awhile at Washington. But he tho't this government not stable, and has sent his resignation. Mad. Pageot wishes to come to Paris to see her

son. The drawing-room is so late, you had better come over here for seven days."

"27 *April*, 1848.

" . . . Lady L. Tennyson wished to know if ladies can gain access to the great meeting for the opening of the Assembly. This is a republican country; the doors will open; all the world will form themselves into the cue; and citizen or *travailleur*, lady or maid, all will have an even chance. There will be, so I was told yesterday, no more favour than is shown at Washington.

"Yesterday morning early I strolled on the banks of the Seine, which the rains have swollen into a magnificent stream. The whole bed of the river, from wall to wall was full; and the yellow stream rolled on magnificently with a rush that almost reminded one of the Rhone; only the Rhone is so pure, so transparent. I extended my walk as far as Nôtre Dame, which I found the republic busy in repairing. The quais were as crowded as could well be; the life, the motion, showed France to have lost nothing of her vivacity. In the commercial world the worst is over. Weigh this fact. The bank-notes of the Bank of France are irredeemable; that is, specie payment is suspended; and the rate of discount on bank paper for silver is but ½ per cent. Gold is worth no more and not quite so much as it was when we were here. That shows no bad state of things.

"Coming back from my walk I returned to my archives: and then went to Thiers to dine, meeting the constant Mignet and Cousin. After dinner Wolowski

came in, and d'Argout, the President of the Bank. The news about the elections is very favourable to the lovers of moderation. From the country the accounts are all of that colour; from Paris it is even probable that Louis Blanc is not elected and that Ledru-Rollin[1] gets in by the skin of his teeth."

"Paris *le* 29 *d'Avril* 1848.

". . . Half London is here; M. Milnes, Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham, Hayter, Moffat, Wilson, etc., etc., and all are convinced, that men can live peaceably, happily, gaily and safely without the expense and inconvenience of a king. Everything promises more and more the triumph of moderation; and the manifest expression of that moderation begins to make a republic popular with those who at first were afraid of it. You will see by the journals, that the Assembly will be in the hands of wise and able men: Miss Berry need have no fears about her five per cents.; though there may be some little interruption. The credit of France will be maintained, and the interests of industry respected. In a week, the chance is that now in 1848 will come to pass what Manzoni told me in my youth would have happened in the last century but for Pitt; that the revolution in France will pass off so quietly and beneficially, that all neighbouring states will imitate the example. Lord Palmerston's highly reprehensible conduct towards Spain and Portugal will hasten the crisis for those monarchies.

"The other night I called at Lamartine's, hardly spoke with him. He was going to the play. I stole out

[1] Minister of Interior under the Provisional Government.

and went before him. His reception was magnificent; such as becomes a man who had just united nearly three hundred thousand suffrages in his favour in a single city. All eyes were on him, all voices raised to bless him. Again and again, the warm salutation burst from the immense crowd that absolutely filled the theatre; and to perfect the exuberant expression or opinion, the orchestra must play 'The Marseillaise.'

"I have seen a great deal of Thiers this time. He came to me Friday and spent more than two hours. He has a wonderful clearness of perception; sees directly the nature of a new position; and has courage even to a fault to execute what his judgment at the moment approves. This has injured [him]; for time often engenders regrets for the policy which an occasion dictates; so that after all boasts of sagacity, decision and effective control, the statesman who adheres to principle finds himself on a good foundation, when the adverse occasion passes by. . . ."

Nearly a year later there was another visit, for which the following extracts from two letters shall speak:

"*Sunday*, 4 *February*, 1849.

" . . . The Assembly had a terrible row yesterday: the ministry were beaten 20 votes. Poor Léon Faucher[1] who on Friday stood on a pedestal of pacific glory, radiant with satisfaction, found himself in the vocative. What is to happen next? A resignation of ministers or a *coup d'état?* Here I was inter-

[1] Minister of Interior and Public Works, 1849–1851.

rupted. First came ——, an American. Him I yawned off. Then de Tocqueville, and him I delighted to hear. Then de Lasteyrie. So must sum up my evening. From Lamartine's I went to Marrast's, formerly editor of the National, now President of the Assembly. The ministry against whom he voted—that is, some of them—were dining with him, and the President was to have been his guest. But the vote kept him away under the pretext of ill health. The President of the Assembly is *magnifiquement logé;* and his rooms were full. . . . The situation of things here is very grave. All parties are in the wrong: everybody is in the wrong. Common sense has disappeared: impatience triumphs over reason. Unless Faucher resigns, to-morrow the majority against ministers will be larger than before.

"And the 24th of February, famous anniversary, is at hand."

"*Sunday,* 11 *February,* 1849.

" . . . Yesterday, beginning very early, and working till dark I almost finished four volumes. In the evening I dined with the Société of economists. The dinner was charming. Four of the members of this society have become ministers: and all four left their liberal principles of economy at the gate as they walked into the hotels of their departments. During dinner, conversation was animated; after dinner we had a political discussion which was very interesting. Wolowski, Faucher's brother-in-law, Bastiat, whose little volume translated by Porter I left on my tables,

Anisson-Dupéron (who has invited me four times to dine) and others of more or less renown took part in the discussion which assumed at last a decidedly political cast. After this I went to Lamartine's. The crowd was great. 'I see,' said I, 'it is the Paris fashion for the greatest crowd to attend the soirées of those who are not ministers.' He was pleased: and then talking of his employments, on my expressing surprise at his finding time to write and publish Raffaelle, 'Oh!' said he, 'that is the least. There is Raphael, then two volumes of my "confidences" to which I am adding a third; I am publishing a new and revised edition of fourteen volumes of my works, and a history of the revolution of *Fevrier* in three volumes; and I am very constant in attending the Assembly. And all this,' said he, (just as tranquilly as you would speak of making your visits in an evening), 'I am carrying on at the same time.'"

In April and August, also, there were visits. In one of the April letters occurs the sentence: "As for the republic, the legitimists take it as a 'transition,' which I thought was being anti-republican. 'No,' the anti-republican word is that the republic is a '*crise.*'" An August letter contains the statements: "France cannot escape being a Republic. So people admit more and more." A longer passage from a letter written during this visit is as follows:

"*August* 6, 1849.

". . . Lamartine says, that Louis Napoleon came to him in May last on the reconstruction of his government,

urging him exceedingly to assume its chieftainship, and came day after day for four or five days with new importunities. I think this offer to the honour of Louis, and I think the refusal does honour to Lamartine, whom all allow incorruptible.

"As to changes in Government, it is agreed that the President keeps about him or has about a set of fellows who are perpetually urging him to be declared emperor: and others are in hot haste to change the present constitution. But the plan seems to be to wait for a new Assemblée constituante, who will introduce in due time the changes that the people of France may wish. At present *c'est la re-action tout-pure. . . .*"

In still another August letter (dated the 13th) Bancroft writes: "Do not regret that I came at once to Paris. My mind is now at ease, and I am ready to go home. And I do not regret the time and money I have spent in my collections. They are worth all and more than they have cost me."

On the first of September, 1849, he sailed from Liverpool for New York, his home for the eighteen years immediately following. This period of constant production suffered no interruption from the duties of public office.

VII

THE CITIZEN OF NEW YORK

1849—1867

When Bancroft returned to America he immediately became a citizen not of Boston, where he had lived for seven years without becoming what is called a Bostonian, nor of Washington, but of New York. Free to settle where he would, he chose the city in which the tide of American life flowed most strongly and characteristically. Then, as now, the commercial supremacy of the place was bringing Americans of every section within its doors; and, at least as a gateway, it attracted the travellers from abroad whose equipment was indeed imperfect when it did not contain a letter of introduction to Mr. Bancroft. He was not long in finding and buying a house at 17 West Twenty-first Street,[1] well suited to his domestic, social and scholarly purposes. Soon after his return from London he acquired also the place at Newport which became his summer refuge through all the remaining years of his life, except the few which he passed in Germany. Letters to Mrs. Bancroft reveal his lively interest in the furnishing of the New York

[1] For the first year of his residence in New York Bancroft lived at 32 West Twenty-first Street.

house; and scores of others, to seedsmen, nurserymen, gardeners, and friends who could enlighten him, as Emerson did, upon the planting of fruit-trees, tell with what zeal he undertook the beautifying of his Newport grounds. This interest remained unabated through life, and flowered most notably in the roses which became his special care and pride.

Within a year from the time of his return from England, Bancroft's daughter Louisa, whose health seems never to have been of the strongest, died at the age of seventeen. The only other daughter, the sole child of the second marriage, had, as we have seen, even a shorter life. Thus at fifty Bancroft was the father of only two living children, the sons who survived him. The elder of these, named for Bancroft's maternal grandfather, John Chandler, returned to the ancestral Massachusetts. The younger, bearing his father's name, became in early manhood a resident of France, where all his life has since been passed. Through living in New York, Bancroft was cut off from much personal intercourse with his own sisters and brother. Yet their correspondence was abundant; and it contains many evidences of brotherly spirit and deed on the part of the most fortunate member of the family towards those with whom circumstance had dealt less kindly. At this point, however, in the light of profuse correspondence deliberately preserved—for what purpose if not for the biographer's candid consideration?—it should be said that, in the most intimate relations of all, Bancroft was disposed to insist upon a reciprocity of sentiment and expression illustrating rather the prin-

ciple of *quid pro quo* than that of the highest generosity. This quality revealed in his letters may fairly be ascribed to a fervid belief in himself, which had already plunged him into more than one controversy on historical and literary matters and was to involve him in others. Even this passing allusion to a pronounced characteristic of the man might be omitted but for his own careful preservation of the records which establish it.

The records of the years in New York, however, preserve the evidences of another characteristic which had far more important relations to the work of Bancroft's life, and is therefore of greater public concern. The characteristic of the scholar's industry was never more fully illustrated than in this period. One of the letters in the preceding chapter[1] recounts the chief treasures in the way of historical documents which Bancroft brought home from England with him. The introduction to his sixth volume describes these acquisitions even more fully. The private libraries and manuscript collections belonging to the descendants of the chief personages in the British government during the American Revolution, the public archives of England, France and Germany, had been searched with the thoroughness of a mining prospector seeking for veins of gold. Bancroft and his assistants had transcribed unpublished letters and documents in quantities which provided him with a very considerable library in manuscript. At the same time he had seized every opportunity to enrich his shelves with rare and important

[1] See pp. 42–44.

printed books. All this had been accomplished at the cost of infinite trouble and lavish expenditure. Historical students of a later generation who quarrel with some of Bancroft's methods will at least do well to remember that in the matter of going to original sources he set the historians of his day and our own the example of a pioneer whose work can hardly be better done.

Here, then, were the materials for a fruitful continuance of the work to which Bancroft had set his hand as a young man. He saw before him a period of unbroken opportunity. Three volumes of the History stood to his credit, as we have seen, before he went to England. The eighteen years of his private citizenship were to prove the most productive period of his life, for between 1849 and 1867 six more volumes of the History,[1] a volume of *Literary and Historical Miscellanies* (1855) and the official Eulogy upon Abraham Lincoln swelled the number of his published books. His correspondence overflows with tokens of prodigious industry. Wherever there was a man or woman, north, south, east

[1] These volumes, all described under the general title *History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent*, are entitled, one by one, as follows: Volume IV (1852), The American Revolution, Epoch First. The Overthrow of the European Colonial System, 1748–1763; Volume V (1852), The American Revolution. Epoch Second. How Great Britain Estranged America, 1763–1774; Volume VI (1854), The Crisis. (The first words of the Preface are: "The present volume completes the History of the American Revolution considered in its causes"); Volumes VII (1858) and VIII (1860), The American Revolution, Epoch Third. America Declares Itself Independent, 1774–1776; Volume IX (1866), The American Revolution, Epoch Fourth. The Independence of America is Acknowledged, 1776–1782.

or west, who could provide Bancroft with unpublished letters or information not commonly accessible, he found that person out, and sought and got the facts which he or she alone possessed. Perhaps the most important single acquisition was that of the papers of Samuel Adams, in which those of the Boston Committee of Correspondence were included. This unwearied search was not confined to subjects still to be treated, but concerned itself as eagerly with themes in the volumes already published and susceptible of revision.

The seventh volume of the History (1858) has the unfortunate distinction of being the first from which Bancroft omitted footnotes. He continued this practice in the eighth, and returned only partially to the more scholar-like method in the ninth and tenth. His own explanation of the omission was that it sprang "not from an unwillingness to subject every statement of fact, even in its minutest details, to the severest scrutiny; but from the variety and multitude of the papers which have been used, and which could not be intelligibly cited, without burdening the pages with a disproportionate commentary." He expressed his hope that at a future day he might cull out from the voluminous manuscripts he had brought together letters that would both confirm his narrative and possess a general interest; but this hope was never fulfilled. When the 1858 volume appeared, Prescott wrote to Lady Lyell: "It is a pity that he has not supported his story by a single note or reference. The reader must take it all on the writer's word."[1] In Prescott's sentiment of regret

[1] See Ticknor's *Life of William Hickling Prescott*, p. 406.

the great majority of historical students have since shared.

From the distractions of the summer at Newport, Bancroft frequently took refuge in the solitude of his New York house. His letters to Mrs. Bancroft, during these periods of separation and hard work contain illuminative bits. "I wish for your sake," he wrote in September, 1856, "that I loved Newport more or rather disliked it less. But all your accounts of the beach and the clime are lost on me. I do not feel a regret for them." Two years later, the cry was almost one of exultation and release: "Certainly Newport, in contrast with my life here, has many superiorities. But in the evening the quiet of my room and the comfort of a good book were worth more to me than a game of cards, which I never consent to take in hand without shame for a waste of time." In the following summer he wrote, "I pass my time without repining except it be at my want of power for real strenuous industry. Time was when seventeen hours' work a day had nothing to me appalling; now it is an utter impossibility." Yet even then there were nearly thirty years more of hard, productive work before him.

The results of these labours, in the mere accumulation of raw material, would have overwhelmed a man who lacked an effective method of handling them. Had Bancroft belonged to the generation of the card-catalogue, he doubtless would have turned it to good account. Yet his own method was simple and serviceable. In preparing to write upon any period he devoted each page in a blank book of quarto size to a

MRS. GEORGE BANCROFT

Probably taken at Brady's National Gallery, New York, after her return from England. From a picture owned by Elizabeth B. Bliss

single day, and on that page noted every event belonging to it, together with thoughts of his own, quotations and allusions bearing upon these events. Even the phases of the moon were noted.[1] This gave him the daily sequence of historic events, and enabled his orderly mind to make an orderly presentation of his material. These diaries of the past, now to be seen in the Lenox Library, bear to Bancroft's finished work the relation of an anatomical sketch to the painter's final rendering of colour and form; and they are no less important.

When his volumes, one by one, were written, Bancroft had them manufactured at his own cost, and turned over their distribution to Messrs. Little, Brown & Co., of Boston, under an arrangement which constituted them rather his agents than his publishers as the term is now understood. The popularity of the History can hardly be measured in terms of comparison with any work of a similar kind appearing in this later day; for it would be difficult to name such a work passing so rapidly into many editions, preceded by careful revision. Nor was the high esteem in which they were held confined to what has since become the novel-reading public. The discriminating few regarded them as highly as the many. A few passages from the letters of friends to whom Bancroft sent his volumes in this period speak for the general temper of the time.

"Your work rises as it progresses," wrote Washington Irving in 1852, "gaining in unity of subject and in moral grandeur as it approaches the great national

[1] From letter of Dr. Austin Scott to the author, Jan. 9, 1908.

theme. . . . You are securing for yourself what Milton looked forward to achieve by lofty aspirations—'an immortality of fame.'" Other letters on the appearance of subsequent volumes exhibit even an increase in Irving's enthusiasm. In 1852 also, Lord Mahon wrote from England: "Let me congratulate you on the very great ability with which you have dealt with the enormous mass of the American papers of that period. . . . In drawing from these multifarious sources you have been able to combine a lucid and well-poised narrative —a narrative full, yet not too full, considering on which side of the Atlantic it was composed; for we ought always to bear in mind that the same series of events which in England is only *a* history is in America *the* history; touching the foundation of the Commonwealth, and as such requiring to be treated in ample detail. In discussing the several American States, your tone is so fair and so equable that it would not be easy to decide from it to which of them in birth and affection you personally belong. The same spirit of candour and upright dealing accompanies you to England."

In this same year (1852) Henry Hallam wrote Bancroft a letter in which gratitude and admiration were tempered as follows: "But I must fairly tell you, that I do not go along with all your strictures on English statesmen and on England, either in substance, or, still more, in tone. You write as an historian, but you must expect that we shall read as Englishmen. Faults there were, but I do not think that all were on one side. At all events, a more moderate tone would carry more weight. An historian has the high office of holding the scales."

Two years later, in 1854, the following expression came from Theodore Parker: "I know not which most to admire: the mighty diligence which collects all the facts and words—even the minutest particles of characteristic matter—or the subtle art which frames them into so nice a mosaic picture of the progress of the People and the Race. I think you are likely to make, what I long since told you I looked for from *you*, the most noble and splendid piece of historical composition, not only in English, but in any tongue." Two more fragments of approval from the same decade must be given. The first is from Emerson, in 1858: "The history is richer not only in anecdotes of great men, but of the great heart of towns and provinces than I dared believe; and—what surprised and charmed me—it starts tears, and almost makes them overflow on many and many a page. . . . It is noble matter, and I am heartily glad to have it nobly treated." Last of all Edward Everett, the friend of Bancroft's youth, wrote, also in 1858: "I take great pleasure in reflecting that I predicted at the outset the brilliant success which is crowning your life-labour."

That Bancroft was sensitive to adverse criticism, even intolerant of it at times, there is no occasion to deny. For his appreciation of praise from a source which he valued, the following letter may speak:

To George Ripley.

"New York, *March* 5, 1853.

"I was very deeply touched on finding in Putnam's monthly for March such renewed proof of your regard.

"In spite of all the stoicism which the necessities of my life may have taught me, I find my indifference to opinion is only superficial; and that I am profoundly sensitive to words of encouragement. I may own to you, that I read the strong expression of your cordial approbation with corresponding secret pleasure; yet much, very much as I value your praise, I value the paper far more as a marked public evidence of that friendship which has subsisted between us for so many years, that on my side I have hardly one so intimate, and of so long continuance. I trust and hope it may outlast our lives and that you may be my survivor; not from the selfish hope that you may write my epitaph, but because I should value life less if deprived of the sympathy of a friend like you."

Bancroft's readiness to profit by helpful criticism is often shown. A considerable portion of his correspondence with his sister Lucretia (Mrs. Farnum) is concerned at one time with her comments on his proof-sheets. Writing in 1858 to Dr. Richard Frothingham, author of the *History of The Siege of Boston*, he said: "And now I have a great favour to ask of you. Take your copy of Vol. VII; fill it full of cavils, criticisms and questionings, especially on the battle of Bunker Hill; and send it to me. Be as severe and hypercritical as I was in my notes on you. I want very particularly to know your opinion as to the *exact accuracy* of the Narrative." In 1862 a similar spirit is shown in a letter to the Rev. Edmund de Schweinitz of the Moravian Church: "I have immediately marked the errors

which you were so very good as to point out. If my life and health are spared I will endeavour in a future edition to do more exact justice to the Moravian Fraternity. . . . If in any other matters you have found errors of facts or opinions, in my volumes, I shall be truly grateful to you if you will point them out."

When Bancroft was not ready to admit the justice of objections to his work, he defended himself with the vigour of his own colonials on Bunker Hill. From this attitude resulted the controversy called "The War of the Grandfathers," which followed the appearance of his ninth volume in 1866. This volume had to deal with the military records of conspicuous generals whose fame was dear to their descendants. Its opportunities for giving offence were consequently many, and Bancroft seems to have seized them all. There was even prefixed to the narrative itself a "Memorandum" reviving the Grahame controversy of 1846. This time the quarrel was with the Rev. Dr. George E. Ellis, a respected Unitarian minister and historical scholar of Boston. Bancroft called openly into question his veracity regarding some letters from Grahame to Ellis which President Quincy had used in writing his pamphlet against Bancroft.[1] Dr. Ellis retorted in a letter to the Boston *Daily Advertiser* (February 8, 1867) virtually setting up his own veracity against Bancroft's. He was willing, however, to make allowance for the lapse of time and the occupation of his mind by other things, and declared a strong persuasion—rather than actual proof—that he and not Bancroft was in the right on the chief

[1] See I, p. 239.

point at issue. When one has read the charges and counter-charges, the proverbial confusion due to disagreeing doctors is worse confounded: but, again, Bancroft's spirit and method leave more of sympathy with his opponents than he could have desired. The actual "War of the Grandfathers," however, was of a magnitude far surpassing this little skirmish.

The chief engagement of the war was with William B. Reed, of Philadelphia, formerly attorney-general of Pennsylvania and minister to China, and for years a friendly correspondent of Bancroft on historical matters. The conduct of his grandfather, Joseph Reed, during the Revolution, had long been a subject of controversy; and when Bancroft came to consider it in his ninth volume, he painted Reed's character in anything but flattering colours. The grandson came loyally to his defence in a pamphlet, *President Reed of Pennsylvania: a Reply to Mr. George Bancroft and others* (Philadelphia, 1867). Bancroft retorted with *Joseph Reed: a Historical Essay* (New York, 1867); which in turn brought forth from William B. Reed, *A Rejoinder to Mr. Bancroft's Historical Essay on President Reed* (Philadelphia, 1867). To Reed's reflections on Benjamin Rush in this pamphlet a descendant of Rush retorted in a pamphlet, and the magazines and newspapers rang with the clash of arms. Now that the sounds of the battle have quite died away, there is a certain irony to be found in the dealing of time with one of the chief points under discussion—Bancroft's charge that Reed in the days of discouragement before Valley Forge sought and received "a protection" from Count

Donop, a Hessian officer. In 1876 the adjutant-general of New Jersey discovered in the papers of his office evidence that it was a Colonel Charles Reed of the militia and not Joseph Reed at all to whom the Hessian protection was accorded.[1] Had either Bancroft or William B. Reed been aware of this fact, much powder might have been saved.

While the Reed controversy was raging in Philadelphia, in New York Mr. George L. Schuyler was publishing, in his grandfather's defence, *Correspondence and Remarks upon Bancroft's History of the Northern Campaign of* 1777, *and the Character of Major-Gen. Philip Schuyler* (New York, 1867). In Boston—where Colonel Samuel Swett had already published in 1859 *A Defence of Colonel Timothy Pickering against Bancroft's History*—two more grandsons entered the field: George Washington Greene with his pamphlet *An Examination of Some Statements concerning Major-General Greene, in the Ninth Volume of Bancroft's History of the United States* (Boston, 1866), and Thomas Coffin Amory with two pamphlets in defence of General Sullivan. The tenth volume of the History called forth from Mr. Amory still further justifications of his grandfather.

To sift the merits of each and all of these differences between Bancroft and his critics would be to engage in far-reaching investigation. A reading of what Bancroft wrote in the first instance, of the objections to his state-

[1] See Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*, Vol. VIII, pp. 477–9, note. This long note contains a full and excellent review of all the controversies following the appearance of Bancroft's ninth volume.

ments, and of such defences of himself as he made, reveals the fact that Bancroft's condemnations of the officers were not always so sweeping as their filial defenders would lead one to suppose. It appears further that even where some of Bancroft's conclusions were sound, they were surrounded by inferences and imputations of motives to which a grandson jealous of his family fame would most naturally object. In more than one instance Bancroft's withholding of credit where credit was due sprang rather transparently from a desire to fix upon Washington's brow every laurel it could accommodate. Let it be said, in conclusion of the matter, that in the final revision of his History, nearly twenty years after the ninth volume appeared, phrases and passages were dropped or modified after a fashion clearly showing that Bancroft had taken the arguments of the grandsons to heart.[1]

Bancroft was an eager reader, not only in his special domain of history, but in many other fields of literature. A friend at whose house in New York he was a frequent visitor during this period of life recalls his tendency, on entering the drawing-room, to stop at the centre-table, even on his way to offer his salutations to his hostess, and notice and handle, with the furtive quickness of a raccoon, the volumes in view.[2] Many books which have

[1] The circumstantial charge, in Vol. IX, pp. 228–9, that Joseph Reed received a protection from the Hessian Donop, whose diary is quoted in evidence, is reduced in the "Author's Last Revision" to a simple statement that "Reed sought shelter within the enemy's line at Burlington."

[2] From notes of conversation with the Hon. John Bigelow, November, 1905.

taken their place among the classics of the last century challenged the unhampered opinion of Bancroft and his contemporaries. Many theories and beliefs now thrice familiar offered themselves as new. Two letters in the first of his summer absences from Mrs. Bancroft (1850) preserve his first impressions of the poem with which Tennyson signalised the central year of the century: "I am reading Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, the best of his work, yet very metaphysical, and somewhat gloomy. I do not think I have got as yet at the bottom of his meaning. The verse flows with exquisite sweetness; and he takes occasion to speculate on the soul and its relations to life, sometimes with mysticism and sometimes with great sweetness and pathos."

A few days later he reverted to the subject:

"I have read again and with more care the first hundred pages of Tennyson. It is the most gloomy book I ever had in hand; dealing with every question of immortality and separate consciousness, profoundly and perseveringly sceptical. It is not only grief without hope, but grief without faith, and I think it would be true to say, without love. He reasons on the progress of the race: he does not feel for it warmly. Love for humanity does not become a religion to him in the absence of any other. I like my Moravian graveyard a thousand-fold better.[1] They loved one another and loved the Lamb, even if they did think the Father so remote that they knew nothing about him."

This view of *In Memoriam* at least arrests attention as that which did not come to prevail in the world. It has

[1] He had just visited Bethlehem, Penna.

its value as an indication that Bancroft's commerce with the facts of history never displaced entirely that interest in matters of faith which led him early to the study of theology. The same interest expresses itself later, and even more dogmatically, in the following letter:

To GEORGE RIPLEY.

"*Friday*, 12 *September*, 1857.

"Atheism is godlessness. The atheist and the theist are the man without God and the man of God. God is the supreme being. The men without God fall into three classes: the practical atheist: the sceptical atheist: the speculative atheist. The practical atheist lives for the senses and knows nothing beyond indulging them: the sceptical atheist cannot say whether there is anything beyond the senses: the speculative dogmatic atheist declares there is nothing beyond what sense makes known. A dogmatic affirmative atheist is always a materialist.

"The theists are of three classes: the practical who lives religion, and renews God in his soul; the sceptical theist, who doubts the power to prove by argument the being of God but feels and so believes; the speculative dogmatic theist who proves God from ontology to teleology.

"None but the superstitious would pray to God for a special, personal, material favour: prayer would be in that case a perpetual demand of God to break his own laws, which his providence necessarily upholds. The believer in God, instead of asking God to break his

laws, seeks to bring his own will into harmony with the divine will. Piety studies the law, obeys the law, loves the law, and through perfect obedience becomes perfectly free. For liberty is the daughter of necessity."

Another significant bit is found (1860) in one of the letters to Mrs. Bancroft expressing pleasure in a *London Quarterly* review in refutation of Darwin: "The faith in ideas is exactly what I approve of; and I believe 'preventing grace' precedes the formation of every living thing; as well as of every regeneration of a soul, or any event in history." With Agassiz on his side, Bancroft need not be scorned for balking at the revolutionary doctrines of Darwinism. Neither contemporaries nor posterity, however, could better the terms in which Bancroft, thanking Emerson for a copy of *The Conduct of Life,* in 1860, recorded his appreciation of the essays: "I have read them with delight: the pages are sometimes like a charge of serried bayonets; and sometimes open peeps at nature in her workshop."

While he was travelling far and wide in the realms of thought, Bancroft, in the body, was anything but a stay-at-home New Yorker. The letters of nearly every year in the fifties chronicle the travels which the historian of the whole country ought surely to have made. He writes frequently from the middle and far south, from the middle west and the Mississippi Valley. In 1854 he was one of a party of distinguished excursionists to St. Louis and the Falls of St. Anthony. In October, 1855, he took part at Yorkville, S. C., in the celebration of the battle of King's Mountain, and made

a speech reported in the New York papers.[1] In September, 1860, he spoke, in a tone of defiance towards British aggression, at the inauguration of the monument to Commodore Perry at Cleveland, Ohio.[2] The full catalogue of journeys, and the letters describing them, would make a chapter of their own. A single letter of 1854, on the journey to the Mississippi, may be presented for its impressions of a new country now growing old:

To Mrs. Bancroft.

"Chicago, *Sunday*, 4 *June*, 1854.

"We left Cleveland on Friday at 3 o'clock, having spent the morning in driving through the streets and lovely environs of the Forest City. From Cleveland to Toledo, the road passes through the richest land; on the whole line, right and left, there seemed to be not a square foot of poor soil. Our party stopped at Toledo, a city thriving like every other centre of western travel and commerce, but as yet not having in its building and residences the amenity of Cleveland. But the Maumee is a deep and noble river and in time I have no doubt the town must be both prosperous and agreeable. We were to have rested in Geneva; but the evening was delightful, the moon bright; and we went on to Jonesville, which we reached at eleven o'clock. The country inn was somewhat picturesque: we turned in upon feather beds; I soon fell asleep, and I

[1] See New York *Tribune*, October 11, 1855.
[2] See New York *Tribune*, September 12, 1860.

know not what genii rested on my eyes and lips and ears; but all who I had ever known in my youth came about me, and I seemed to expire amidst the sweetest offices of friendship and love. But if dreams shed a halo over my rest, the dawn of day roused us; and we had just time to reach the train, which came whistling along, stirring the dust, heavy as it was with dew. All that can be said of the country is told, when you get an account of rising villages in the midst of rich cleared lands. We passed several prairies; but civilisation had been at work upon them; and all the difference between prairie farms and cleared lands is, that the one have not a stump to mar the smoothness of their surface; and the others are thickset with girdled trees and ruins of old forests. Talk of flowers: the lands along the Erie Railroad abound far more in laural and azalea; and the flatness of the country, which is its most striking feature, gives the impression of a sea of meadows and forests; but must to a resident have a wearisome character of monotony. Every thing to the travellers was pleasant except that I caught in the late train from Toledo a very bad cold; but for all that arrived in good heart at Chicago, at noon, took possession of a very comfortable room, (considering the crowd) dined and spent the afternoon in driving through the streets of this wonderful prairie city, which has a population of twenty thousand, and its oldest native inhabitant is but twenty-two years old. Our House is very crowded; but instead of looking to see who are here, I went to bed, to get a good night's sleep. . . . Chicago is a large city built on flat land directly upon the Lake and the still

river, on the edge of the prairie; new, dusty in dry weather, muddy in wet; busy and active; conducting a commerce which is probably greater than that of any European continental place except Havre; and full of the hope of boundless prosperity and increase.

"I went to church this morning; the minister was high church, and quite delighted Mrs. Oakley, whom I congratulated; and she, triumphing over her husband, was won by my sympathy, and sent her love to you. Tomorrow I take up the line of March for the West: and doubt if it will be possible to write you again, till I return from the Falls.[1] Letters would lag behind me. Minturne is in this house; George Bliss; half Connecticut; many from New York. We shall have five boats on the Mississippi, and a party of six hundred. Filmore, Hall, Miss Sedgwick, Silliman are of the number; railroad men from near and far. I wish you would write to me at Detroit, and at Niagara Falls. I shall on my return stop at both places."

In the social and intellectual life of New York itself through all these years Bancroft bore no inconsiderable part. The letter-files and memorandum books bear evidence of frequent engagements with the world of "society" at his own dinner-table and in many other houses. His membership in the New York Historical Society and the Century Association, brought him into constant friendly relations with the most interesting men of the city. At the semi-centennial celebration of the New York Historical Society, November 20, 1854, he

[1] Of St. Anthony.

delivered an address on "The Necessity, the Reality and the Promise of the Progress of the Human Race," which was received with the highest favour. Included in his *Literary and Historical Miscellanies*, it affords an excellent example of Bancroft's oratorical style, philosophic, stately even to the magniloquence in keeping with the large treatment of a large theme. One of its paragraphs will illustrate especially the orator's personal conception of the function of history:

"It is because God is visible in History that its office is the noblest except that of the poet. The poet is at once the interpreter and the favourite of Heaven. He catches the first beam of light that flows from its uncreated source. He reports the message of the Infinite, without always being able to analyse it, and often without knowing how he received it, or why he was selected for its utterance. To him and to him alone, history yields in dignity, for she not only watches the great encounters of life, but recalls what had vanished, and partaking of a bliss like that of creating, restores it to animated being. The mineralogist takes special delight in contemplating the process of crystallisation, as though he had caught nature at her work as a geometrician; giving herself up to be gazed at without concealment such as she appears in the very moment of exertion. But history, as she reclines in the lap of eternity, sees the mind of humanity itself engaged in formative efforts, constructing sciences, promulgating laws, organising commonwealths and displaying its energies in the visible movement of its intelligence. Of all pursuits that require analysis, history, therefore,

stands first. It is equal to philosophy; for as certainly as the actual bodies forth the ideal, so certainly does history contain philosophy. It is grander than the natural sciences; for its study is man, the last work of creation, and the most perfect in its relations with the Infinite." It is hardly surprising that a subsequent passage, condemning the teachings of Arius, and emphasising the "truth of the triune God" called forth a letter from a Massachusetts minister who had known Bancroft's father. To the question about what seemed a change of theological views, Bancroft made reply: "It would be most candid to compare what I have written in former days with what I have written lately. Perhaps you will find less discrepancy than you imagine."

For the arts—especially music, the drama and painting—there was always a place in Bancroft's range of interests. In a letter from London to one of his sisters, there is a refreshing sentence about a visit to the theatre where "a very droll *extravaganza* made me do what I love above all things, laugh heartily." References to his enjoyment of opera occur frequently in his letters, and his name is naturally found amongst those of the earliest supporters of the New York Academy of Music. A letter in reply to a request for an increase in his subscription to the young undertaking reveals a vein somewhat rare in his correspondence:

To M. H. Grinnell.

"New York, *January* 20, 1855.

"If I had ships sailing to the Indies, lines of packets

to Liverpool, stocks that give dividends, a finger in the purse of Fortunatus, or a bit of land in El Dorado, I should respond to your note with cheerfulness in the manner you wish; but in hard times, a scholar is the first to feel the pressure, for men are unwise enough to think a book the first luxury that can be given up, and women always regard is as a nuisance because it gathers so much dust; therefore moderate as the sum alluded to may seem, it is out of my power to advance it, and I have no doubt that those who incurred the unexpected excess of expense will think it proper to protect the innocent stockholders. Under other circumstances I would not have hesitated a moment, but I am ever, my dear Sir

"Very truly yours
"GEORGE BANCROFT."

Through his membership in the Century Association, of which from 1864 to 1868 he was president[1], some of his most agreeable social relations came about. The remarkable celebration of Bryant's seventieth birthday in 1864, falling within Bancroft's presidency of the Century, put his capacities as official host to a successful test. From the considerable number of letters bearing upon the occasion a characteristic bit from Dr. Holmes, who had been a guest at Bancroft's house, may well be

[1] "It is a fact of some local interest in New York that his unqualified devotion to the cause of the Union contributed in some measure to make him president of the Century Club—a distinction that really distinguished in that Philistine town." See Prof. W. A. Dunning in *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, 1905, p. 404.

rescued: "We had a journey of twelve hours home, to which the horrors of the middle passage were as Cleopatra's voyage down the river Cydnus. Mrs. Howe and I made a vow of absolute taciturnity at starting, and talked each of us the amount of an octavo volume of four hundred and fifty pages." It was also as a devoted Centurion that Bancroft became one of the scant score of members who commissioned Kensett for five thousand dollars to paint a picture which was presented to the Club in 1866.

The purpose of the preceding pages of this chapter has been to chronicle, not in the strict order of time, the various phases of Bancroft's personal and professional life during his years in New York. They were years of great public moment, for in them were included the decade before the war, and the war-time itself. The rest of the chapter shall be concerned, chronologically, with Bancroft's relation to public interests and his return to public life.

On the paramount question of the years before the war, the question of slavery, Bancroft, like certain other faithful Democrats of the North, put himself on record again and again as its uncompromising foe. The following letters, concerned with Kansas and the Dred Scott decision, speak with no faltering tone of his feelings and convictions:

To W. L. Marcy.[1]

"New York, *September* 24, 1856.

"I send today for a passport for my son, but cannot

[1] Then Secretary of State.

let the occasion pass to say how entirely I approve of your putting the question of privateering on its proper ground. You have Franklin on your side, as you will see, if you read all he wrote on the subject.

"I am also glad to believe you disapproved of the course of the President on Kansas matters. The President[1] has been so busy in reading people out of the Democratic Party, that he has at last wandered himself so far astray as to be entirely beyond hailing distance. Nothing could be more execrable than his purpose to enforce the enactments of the fraudulent legislature, which he called 'legitimate.' Of course he has got round him so many whigs, that democrats are crowded out of an organisation pretending to the democratic name. To crown the whole, men whose services are accepted, declare the Union is not to be maintained, if a candidate they do not like, should chance to be elected. It is a cardinal principle of democracy to submit to the will of the majority; old Hickory said the Union must be preserved. But Slidell, as if Buchanan had not already enough to carry, adds his voice for a contingent breaking up the Union, and Choate openly counsels the same, if his words have any meaning. Oh! for a voice of true democracy! But were a man to utter the truth, this bastard race that controls the organisation, this unproductive hybrid begot by southern arrogance upon northern subserviency, would, I dare say, go raving. Buchanan is in a bad position, whether elected or not; and to crown the absurdity of the whole, the South never received so deep wounds as it has received from

[1] Franklin Pierce.

Pierce and Cushing, and the other representatives of a debauched Democracy, who became its flatterers. Kansas must be free; and the only question for wise statesmanship is how to bring about the result, in the manner that will the least disturb tranquility. These are not my views only; they pervade the true part of the democracy.

"There never was in this country a party so thoroughly aristocratic as the party of the southern nullifiers. How my oration of 1836, which you then approved,[1] and which has not lost its truth from time, would be repudiated by what calls itself democracy in the South now. This cruel attempt to conquer Kansas into slavery is the worst thing ever projected in our history. Pierce will be handed over to contempt; for posterity will find for him no apology but in the feebleness of his intellect. Statesmen in high places should think a little of the verdict of coming generations. Pierce was fool enough up to the last to think he was to be nominated at Cincinnati; he was confident he should have a majority on the first ballot, and be nominated before the end of the first day. Whereas the aristocracy always throw aside the tools they have used. They have a new dress and a new name—I have been told and I am glad to believe that you gave him better counsels. Personally I could wish Buchanan success; but I do not wish to see a government composed of whigs and nullifiers. Pierce died of Jefferson Davis and Cushing; but for you and perhaps I should add Guthrie in whose uprightness I have been led to confide, on what could

[1] See I. pp. 217–8.

this administration rest a claim to be remembered with honour? I express to you my opinions frankly, for I have always been your friend."

To JAMES BUCHANAN.

"NEW YORK, *February* 21, 1857.

"I am unwilling you should go into the Presidential Chair without sending you a line of congratulation; and the best act of friendship I can show you is, to tell you as a disinterested observer, how strongly you possess the expectant confidence of the North. The election was no criterion except of the intense and deserved unpopularity of Pierce; but for which your majorities would have been the largest ever known. The country now breathes up after a period of uncertainty, and the feeling is constantly spreading and with increasing power, that the administration is to pass from feeble and incompetent hands to able and safe ones.

"Your position eminently favours independence. If the South gave more votes for you, your nomination was due to the North. The rabid Pro-Slavery Nullifiers, who with affected regard for State Rights on their lips, have done more than any preceding party to concentre power in the general government, and who, with professions of democracy, are the most aristocratic faction in the country, will of necessity oppose you, just as they opposed Jackson. But their opposition is less dangerous than their love. Their friendship was the death of the reputation of Pierce; they cannot be so formidable to you as they were to Jackson, for they have no whig

party now to combine with. You have only to disregard them and all other selfish factions, and the country will bear you up and carry your administration triumphantly over them all.

"We have need of a change. There are four men alive, who have held the office of President; yet not one of them is visited in his retirement as were the great statesmen of the last generation. Of the four, not one will stand thoroughly well with posterity. We need to be reminded of the examples of the best and purest days of our republic.

"I trust it will fall to your lot to bring Kansas into the Union as a free State and with the general acquiescence of the South. That is the only great healing measure, which can restore the country permanently to tranquility; and it is the measure which will call down on your administration the loud applause of the civilised world and of succeeding generations."

To James M. Mason.[1]

"New York, *July* 24, 1857.

". . . I am also your debtor for a copy of the Dred Scott decision, which I have compared with historical documents. The Chief Justice, I am bound to say, is so far as history is concerned, altogether in the wrong. Free coloured men were treated here in New York as citizens, as everybody in this State knows. Therefore the decision is wrong on the ground laid down by the

[1] U. S. Senator from Virginia, afterwards taken, with Slidell, on the *Trent*.

Chief Justice. He is also wrong, in saying white men then or ever regarded the black race as having no rights. I can quote against him one by one any number of opinions, expressed by statesmen, north and south of the Potomac, from the first agitation of strife with England to the formation of the Federal constitution, *i. e.* from 1764 to 1789.

"Then as a question between North and South, I hold that the South has not the slightest interest to limit the full power of the States over the *status* of the coloured man. South Carolina makes a mulatto who is $\frac{7}{8}$ of white descent a citizen. Where is the harm? Let S. C. judge for herself; and so of other States.

"But the decision is injurious to the South. 1. It puts in the right on a United States question those who are not friendly to the South; and makes a new issue, and a most unfortunate one, for the evil-minded have an appearance of being in the right. And 2d, it is a *most* latitudinarian construction of the constitution, which might, by similar interpolations of meaning, be made to warrant almost any interference with the relation of labour.

"I remain of the old States-Rights School; and believe that the framer of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution meant to leave the subject exclusively, unreservedly with the laws of the States.

"Further: it is not good law to shut the U. S. court against the coloured man if he sustains a wrong. *Res sacra miser.* The weaker, the humbler, the more despised, the more wretched, the sufferer of wrong, the more the courts should be open to his complaint. If a Pennsylvanian free negro should be kidnapped and

sold in Texas, the U. S. Court should not forego its right to deliver him. The U. S. Court is open for the master everywhere; whether to recover his slave or to protect him; in like manner the poor black, who has no master, should be allowed to utter his own complaint, if he is wronged.

"Then, too, I think the mischievous propensities of black republicans ought not to be avenged on the poor feeble race, which is innocent of the political excitement. I wish to beat them at the polls; and for that end, would not abandon to their sole exclusive possession any one truth or good feeling.

"But this is a long chapter which I should like to discuss in conversation at length. I am persuaded the South has gained nothing by some extreme notions that have been put forth; and I see and know, that we of the Northern democracy, have been dreadfully routed in consequence, and are handed over to the most corrupt set of political opponents, that I have ever encountered.

"To bring things right, our next President should be of the South; a man of vigour and firmness, of firmness and truly national views, comprehensive and impartial."

To Stephen A. Douglas.

"17 West 21st St., 2 *December*, 1857.

"We did not know till last evening, that you and Mrs. Douglas were in Town, or Mrs. Bancroft and I should have waited on her. Moreover, I have a very stronge desire to see *you*, and enjoy a half hour's conversation with you.

"I hear, and I trust I may believe, that you intend at the opening of Congress to stand by your Nebraska Bill in its plain signification, and not to allow it to become in the hands of timid or unprincipled men an imposture and a sham. At this time, it needs nothing but firmness on your part, in which I never knew you to be wanting, to place your bill, yourself, and Democracy in a proud position, a better one than it has occupied since Polk went out of office.

"To recommend an enabling Act in the very words of your Minnesota Act seems so simple an escape from all trouble, that I cannot persuade myself Mr. Buchanan will miss it. If he does, I trust you will bring it forward.

"Such a measure is just. The Topeka constitution is probably the voice of the people, but it wants form: the Lecompton constitution[1] is withheld from the people: a fatal usurpation, that leaves the Democracy no choice but to reject it.

"Democracy knows no change; it is the same at Chicago and at Mobile. Your enabling Act can stand the ground of fair argument in the one place and in the other; and carry in its favour all but those who wish to usurp the inalienable right of the people.

"At the worst, this brings a few months of delay. What then? The future belongs to truth and right. Nothing but a wrong purpose requires a sudden decision, when deliberation can effect no injustice.

"The Nebraska Bill promises the country that in the

[1] Bancroft presided at the meeting of the New York Democracy in the Academy of Music to protest against the adoption of this constitution for Kansas.

institution of Kansas the people shall decide. The tribunal to consult is not the South or the North, but Kansas. They have a perfect right to reject a constitution or accept it, be it good or bad.

"The Cincinnati Convention promised a reference of Kansas affairs to the people of Kansas. Word is not kept, if it is not done.

"The principles of Democracy require it. The people here rule and should rule, and have a right to decide on their constitution. They do not permit their power to be sequestered; they reserve all power not granted; and hold their trustees and agents, to whom they grant limited powers, to a swift responsibility.

"All precedents are that way. In the revolution the two great states were Virginia and Massachusetts. Massachusetts in 1777 first consulted the people if a new constitution should be formed. This the people in their primary elections voted to do. A constitution was then formed, and it was a very good one. It was submitted to the people and they rejected it. A convention was called; a new constitution made and submitted to the popular vote in 1778 and this was accepted. Virginia had of a sudden to institute Government with the flames of Norfolk, a proclamation emancipating all slaves who would fight against their masters, and envoys sent to the West to bring down on them the savages, to require instant action. Under such circumstances Virginia formed a government without pausing to take the ratification which was spontaneously given. But that first constitution contains the principle, that 'all power is vested in the people,' 'that magistrates are their

trustees and servants and at all times amenable to them.' And whenever Virginia changed this constitution she had always invoked the ratification of the people. So the principle and the prevailing practice of Virginia utterly repudiate the proceedings of the Lecompton convention.

"But the grand, the leading precedent, is the action of the United States themselves. Our government was instituted by a convention. That convention sacredly and most scrupulously respected the innate, indefeasible power of their constituents. They referred the constitution which they formed for acceptance to their constituents; and their constituents accepted it state by state. North Carolina, Rhode Island were not called upon to submit to it, till they had severally by their peoples accepted it.

"But I should not soon end, if I were to undertake to suggest the many reasons why no constitution in Kansas should be accepted by congress, that has not first been accepted by the people of Kansas themselves, in conformity to the Minnesota precedent, to the democratic precedent, to the American precedent, to the indefeasible rights of the people.

"The plan to cheat the people of Kansas of their right is unstatesmanlike. Anybody who studies history, or human nature, must know that it will leave any administration that should attempt it, helpless in Congress, and hopeless with posterity.

"If you should think with me on this subject as I confidently trust you do, pray let me hear from you. It can do no harm, and I may be able to render you aid."

Vigorous as these expressions are, such records of opinion are greatly outnumbered in the preserved correspondence of the fifties by letters dealing with the common things of Bancroft's daily life and work. The inevitable struggle between North and South cast little or no shadow upon the pages in the letter-files. When the crisis came, Bancroft's hopes for a successful handling of it by the government were manifestly faint. In the distrust of the untried Lincoln, prevalent at the North, he fully shared. If other men felt as he did about the new President, it was not their fortune later to have the conspicuous opportunity which came to him as Lincoln's official eulogist to proclaim the verdict as events reversed it. In September of 1861, he wrote to his wife: "We suffer for want of an organising mind at the head of the government. We have a president without brains; and a cabinet whose personal views outweigh patriotism." A few days later he wrote again: "the only trouble of mind I have springs from my want of confidence in our present administration." These were the random frank expressions of intimacy. Happily there is a much fuller utterance of Bancroft's, in the first year of the war, touching its causes and conduct. In July of 1861 Dean Milman wrote him a long letter expressing the sympathy of "sound reflective England" with the North, and saying: "perhaps I am asking what I have no right to ask, but it would be very gratifying to hear from good authority, from authority such as yours, the true state of things, and as far as the wisest may look forward into the thick gloom of the future, the probable issue." To this request Bancroft

replied at great length; and his letter, as the statement of a trained historical observer, has a value which seems to warrant its reproduction, almost entire:

To Dean Milman.

"Newport, R. I., *August* 15, 1861.

". . . Our rebellion is a proof of the vitality of the republican principles; slavery was an anomaly in a democratic country; as a consequence it has felt itself out of place, and has sought all modes of escape from its inevitable destiny. This outburst does not spring from any element of a free government, and bears witness to the capacity of a nation of the free to govern themselves wisely, peacefully and well. This must be borne in mind, let the issue be as it may. I cannot conceive of happier commonwealths, better institutions, or better ruled, than New England for example and Ohio. The disturbing force comes entirely from an anti-republican institution. The doctrine of liberty is proved true, by the fact that it will not be reconciled with slavery. Our calmest men, those who most desire the friendliest relations with England were disappointed in her public policy; I am obliged in candour to say not without reason. But I have little fear of danger from Manchester: the South buys very little of England: the North consumes British manufactures to an enormous and ever-increasing extent. Your men of business know this, and they will not risk the loss of the market for their manufactures, by indulging their impatience for the raw material, for which at the worst, they will

only have to wait a few months or weeks. I fear no conflict; there is nothing to regret but the jar upon public feeling. I think the excitement is subsiding, and if ministers act as you hope they will, must pass away. But our secessionists are in most vigorous correspondence with some of your politicians whose dispositions are mischievous and perverse.

"The beginning, the middle and the end of our troubles, the origin of the disturbances, and the difficulty of their adjustment, lies in the fact that we have four millions of semi-barbarous, semi-civilised men among us, who are unfit for the political franchises of citizens. These men are scattered as slaves, along the low country upon the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, and the two banks of the lower Mississippi: their masters have not virtue enough to set about training them for freedom; and they, the masters, see, or fancy that they see, that freedom will come to the black man at any rate, unless a way should be found for the continual expanse of slavery over new territory. Hence a policy sprung up in the South to add to the country Cuba, which must have been followed by the acquisition of St. Domingo; the northern provinces of Mexico; portions of Central America; and the most imaginative dreamed of introducing the system of forced negro labour along the banks of the Amazon. A slave empire, surrounding the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea, was the dream of the most excited; but the calmest men held fast to the idea that the continuous extension of slavery, was essential to its durability. To this was added the persuasion, that if the influence of the general

government as shown in its appointments to office and administration, should be positively adverse to slavery its foundation in many southern states would be weakened within a very few years, and so leave the extreme South in an impotent minority.

"Besides, the relative power of the free states has been constantly on the increase. In the first Congress, the House of Representatives was composed about equally of members from the free states, and states tolerating slavery; by our new census, the ratio has become as 5 to 3 in favour of freedom, with a certainty of a rapid further increase in the same direction. In the senate the slave states had preserved an equality of numbers, or even a preponderance; now the free states are entitled to 38 senators, against 30, and every year is likely to increase that predominance. The leading politicians at the South, seeing the imminence of these results, have for the last twenty-five years been planning a division of the union. But they were in a minority in the South and were obliged to conceal their ultimate purpose. Last year they deliberately contributed by their policy, towards the election of an avowedly anti-slavery candidate, in order to have a pretext for putting their conspiracy into effect. Their object was not a complete dissolution of the Union; but a 'reconstruction' of the Union, as it was called; that is: they designed themselves to make amendments to the constitution, to undermine the administration of Mr. Lincoln, to attract the states one by one to their new constitution, *all* except New England. By excluding New England, they would recover the preponderance in the Senate, and

have such weight in the house as easily to control the government. They were perfectly sanguine of success. One state after another withdrew to this Aventine mount, that is *seceded:* Mr. Buchanan looked on aghast and inactive. They felt sure of Maryland and Delaware and Missouri; they were confident the importance of their trade would attract Pennsylvania, New York—and the North-West; and they were so certain that Europe must have cotton, and that they and they only could supply cotton, that they counted on England and France as their inevitable allies. They never doubted of their being recognised and sustained by these powers.

"Mr. Lincoln's administration came in and was not for the moment equal to the emergency. It had been chosen in the midst of unexampled prosperity, and was hardly more than suited for summer wear. The plan of seducing the Northern states failed from the beginning through the rightmindedness and honesty of the people; but the confederacy which meantime had been formed, was confident of asserting their independence. Mr. Lincoln's administration wavered, seemed even inclined to let them go. Their influence in the National councils has for the last twenty years been very pernicious; many persons inclined to let them go; some were even glad of their going. But on reflection it was plain that they could not go peaceably.

"1st. The conspiracy had grown out of boundless and indefinite desires; and there were no moderating influences to restrain the wild cravings of excited passion; the confederate states claimed all the country to the Pacific; the state of Missouri and all south of it,

that is, all the good avenues to California; all the frontier of Mexico, which in due-time was to be invaded and absorbed: they would not rest without what we call the border states, the belt of those north of the cotton producing states, including Maryland and Virginia, and as a consequence the seat of government, Washington. So an understanding was impossible.

"2d. The Mississippi is the great central river of the country; many millions of freemen live on its upper banks; Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, great and opulent and well peopled states, would never consent to give up the outlet of that river.

"3d. The same held good, though in less degree of the Bay of the Chesapeake, of which the head waters come from New York and Pennsylvania; and the system of railroads from the waters of the Chesapeake clasps all the West.

"4th. And another omnipotent sentiment began to manifest itself; that the principle on which the separation was demanded, rested on a fallacy which would leave us no country, no state, no social band; it was the doctrine of individualism, pushed to its extremest limit; it would have dissolved the country, society itself, into atoms as lifeless and unconnected as the particles of sound; it would have left no room for the love of country, or the existence of country; for intercourse with foreign nations; for treaties; binding public money contracts; for anything national or international. So the common people came in to the rescue; to the astonishment of the politicians. They came slowly; water you know absorbs a wonderful deal of latent heat before

it bursts into steam. But at last the moment came; when Anderson offered to surrender Fort Sumter at a given day and was repelled and the Stars and Stripes were wantonly and of deliberate purpose fired upon, I witnessed the sublimest spectacle I ever knew; the uprising of the irresistible spirit of the people in behalf of law and order and liberty.

"This rising of the people has settled the question; the North is the *country* and will make good the rights and the constitution of the country. Delaware the smallest slave state at once and with great unanimity declared itself for the union; a fiendish spirit showed itself in Baltimore, but Maryland people at the earliest election proved that they were sound at the core. Kentucky declared her opinion for the Union by an overwhelming vote. Missouri politicians called a convention for the very purpose of dragging their state into disunion; the members of their convention met and turned out of office the politicians that plotted treason and rallied the state under the national banner. Bands of marauders infest parts of Missouri still; but the state is safe beyond peradventure. The Northwestern part of Virginia declared the rebel government of that state to have *abdicated*, following the precedent of 1688 and have instituted governors anew under our national flag. The reverse sustained lately in central Virginia was an accident due to the want of system in inexperienced men and to the too great confidence of the U. S. government.

"But as to what the issue will be I will give you not my judgment but the materials for a judgment of your own. The southern confederacy has no money and no

credit. In no one southern state was there an opportunity given for a free expression of popular opinion; the revolution was effected in every state except South Carolina by a minority; and is now maintained by a free use of passion and terror. The South is essentially, necessarily divided within itself; the poor whites—and they are the majority—will demand, in the event of a successful revolution, will most certainly demand the reopening of the slave trade; for the sake of having negroes cheap at $\frac{1}{5}$ their present price; the intelligent foresee that this would so flood the country with black men, that confusion would follow; the white men would retire before the influx and the blacks would become too numerous for control; while the present large slaveholders do not want this capital reduced seven parts in eight; and to prevent all this the union must be restored. The union was never known at the South, but as a benefit; its interruption is known only as an evil; it never lifted up its hand but to bless. The climate of our southern states is not warm enough to enable the planter to compete in European markets with the tropical sugar-growers; our sugar culture depends on the domestic market alone, and is made possible only by a high duty on foreign sugar; dissolve the union and the sugar culture of our states must be abandoned.

"Every sugar planter is by his interests a union man, whatever the whirlwind of passion may make him for a time. Then all southern white men are not slaveholders; and a party as yet unorganised and feeble but latent, and likely at any time to show itself cannot but see the ruinous effect of slavery. A large part of the men of

wealth of the South yearn for the restoration of the Union as a pledge of security to their persons and interests. To my knowledge some of the largest planters think security of property can be enjoyed only under the Union; and I believe and have cause to believe very many reason in that way. Opinion is suppressed; just as in 1848. France appeared to be republican but easily reverted to its monarchical predilections. The commerce between North and South was most beneficial to both; and the South took from the North provisions, flour and articles most of which Europe could not spare. The action of the South is frenzied and spasmodic, not healthy and well considered. The circumstances that favour the free states are: they have the dominion of the sea, and will soon have the dominion of southern rivers. They have immense wealth and are ready to pour it out like water at the rate of a million of dollars a day: the northern states are for their numbers as rich a country as there is in the world. They have the numbers; nineteen millions in the entirely free states; more than two and a half millions more in the states where slavery still exists, but is not a dominant element. This leaves for the slave states about five and a half millions of white men. But these five and one-half millions of white men have among them three and a half millions of slaves—a great element of weakness in a military point of view; and among those five and one-half millions of white men there is a large indefinite or rather unascertained number of men who altogether disapprove of the attempts at revolution. Louisiana for instance, was clearly against secession.

Tennessee gave an immense vote against it: in both a reckless minority got control of the government.

"So, with the dominion of the sea, with money and credit, with immensely superior numbers, with the aid of national sentiments and a sense of right, judge for yourself of the power of the North and judge also of the relative strength of the parties. Further, look at the map and see how the Alleghanies run down through the whole South into Alabama. In all that mountain range the slavery element is not predominant. Northern Alabama and eastern Tennessee long to get aid enough to enable them to raise the American flag in safety. Western North Carolina is the Switzerland of the United States on this side the Mississippi, and western N. Carolina has almost no slaves. All these will be points at which union men will rally. Sir Charles Lyell can explain to you the important bearing of this consideration. The North will easily hold the mountains, and you will by a glance at the map see how that possession of the mountains is a wedge driven into the very heart of the South.

"But you may ask: why have you not reduced the South? We have redeemed North Western Virginia with the states I have before named, viz.: Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri; we have shut up every considerable port from the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande; as soon as cool weather comes these will be ours and movements [will be made] upon the low countries, where before frost it would be fatal to march an army.

"Have no fears that after victory, we may use the

victory unmercifully. We are more in danger of being too eager to kill the fatted calf for the returning prodigal; but the four millions of semi-barbarous labourers will remain; and here as everywhere else, the palingenesis from an intolerable wrong cannot be hoped for without suffering; so that I cannot vouch for our ability to build up at once the walls of a perfect Jerusalem. Slavery will remain but will cease to reign. Cotton will be cultivated but will no longer be king; and the element of freedom will gradually but surely develop itself in its light and purity.

"You ask after the views of the Secessionists. They never intended to have involved themselves in war with the North; they thought to have carried their measures with a bold hand, intimidating or successfully defying the friends of union. At this moment their whole thoughts are engaged in providing means for the war which they know not how to carry on or how to end. Had they been met in the beginning with half the energy that prevails now, the rebellion would have been crushed in the bud. The cotton states have very artfully transferred the battlefield to Virginia; and as a consequence eastern Virginia is held just between blockade on the side of the sea and the armies of the Union on the west. Her struggle may be long; but her people may learn very soon to execrate the authors of this conspiracy, which brings to them no single advantage and a harvest of devastation and misery.

"For myself my physicial constitution is as vigorous as usual. If Molière is good authority I am now in the flower of my age, for I am but sixty years. I preserve

my health and vivacity by riding ten or twenty miles every fine day and can ride twice twenty miles in a day without fatigue. They say memory is the first faculty that proves treacherous; but this I can assert that every pleasant and instructive hour I have passed with you, the mornings at breakfast, our walks for two delightful days at Oxford, the hours at your own hospitable table and in your own drawing-room under the best of auspices, Mrs. Milman's, are all as fresh to me as if they were of yesterday. I have a charming retreat here by the seaside where I long hoped to see you, but as I have reluctantly given up the thought of your crossing the Atlantic I hope you will sometimes give me the opportunity of seeing your family who come to our country. . . ."

Later in 1861, Bancroft, whose correspondence shows him to have been in touch with both Lincoln[1] and Seward, visited Washington. He arrived on December 10, and two days later wrote Mrs. Bancroft as follows:

To MRS. BANCROFT.

"*Thursday Eve, December* 12, 1861.

"Leaving Mrs. Hooper's at 9¼ I made my way to the

[1] See *Abraham Lincoln*, by Nicolay and Hay, Vol. V, 202–203. "Your administration," wrote Bancroft (November, 1861), "has fallen upon times which will be remembered as long as human events find a record. I sincerely wish to you the glory of perfect success. Civil War is the instrument of Divine Providence to root out social slavery; posterity will not be satisfied with the result, unless the consequences of the war shall effect an increase of free states. This is the universal expectation and hope of men of all parties."

President's Mansion, where Barney was in waiting to introduce me. Mrs. Lincoln just dismissing a visitor or two, and Barney left to go up stairs, so I was left to a tête-a-tête with Madame. She tells me she is a conservative; repudiates the idea, that her secessionist brothers can have the slightest influence on her, spoke of the *Herald* as a paper friendly to Mr. Lincoln, and seemed resolved to adhere to that opinion in spite of a gentle hint from me that it was all persiflage and insincere, discoursed eloquently on the review the other day, as if parading 70,000 men had been a sort of great event in the war. She told what orders she had given for renewing the White House; her elegant fitting up of Mr. Lincoln's room; her conservatory and love of flowers; and ended with giving me a most gracious invitation to repeat my visit, and saying she should send me a bouquet. I came home entranced; could not sleep for my great expectations, hunted up Miss Fish at the breakfast table and told her of my expected honour, and as I anticipated a circle of japonicas begged of her leave to lay my treasure at her feet, when it should come into port. Well, it came: and surely you will think the bouquet must have been magnificent, when I tell you it was a fair counterpart of Mr. Lincoln's brains.

"Tomorrow there is an equestrian party to Mt. Vernon, of which I am not one. As you are great upon autographs I send you that of the first American Lady.

"Madame wished a rogue who had cheated the government made a lieutenant: the cabinet thrice put the subject aside. One morning in came Lincoln sad and sorrowful: 'Ah,' said he, 'to-day we must settle the case

of Lieutenant ——. Mrs. Lincoln has for three nights slept in a separate apartment.' Things do not look very promising. It is well I am near the end of the page, or I might become lugubrious. So farewell. . . ."

The daily letters contain many glimpses of persons important in army and administrative affairs. On the 14th Bancroft saw Mrs. Lincoln again, and wrote: "She is better in manners and in spirit than we have generally heard: is friendly and not in the least arrogant." Two days later he reported interviews of larger significance:

"*Monday, December* 16, 1861.

"My dear Wife, . . . Keeping down my sorrow at heart for the woes of our poor country, which under incompetent hands is going fast to ruin, I have much to say of my proceedings yesterday, more than I can find time for. But here is the Outline. I breakfasted with Mr. Chase, which occupied from $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $10\frac{1}{4}$. His views are good; his integrity and ability make him the first man in the cabinet; but he cannot find money so abundantly as to meet the extravagant and excessive demands on the government. His constitutional views on the south go but a little beyond mine; he applies to all the states in rebellion what I think there is no doubt may be applied to those formed out of Louisiana.

"I wished to see Lander,[1] and asked where he lived. Mr. Chase was so good as to offer to go with me. I

[1] Gen. F. W. Lander, author of *Rhode Island to the South* and other war poems.

found in Lander a man, if not of genius, of inspiration; brave, hardy, fearless, of immense executive ability; full of ideas, a poet and a very good one. He married about 14 months ago a person of whom he seemed very fond; and she in return, enters into his tales of battles and his zeal for desperate service. 'The Lord thinks for me,' he said to me. He has written a poem which he calls 'Inspiration,' in which he carries out the thought that underlies the remark I have just quoted. What he repeated of it to me I liked very much. He said he had not shown the poem to his wife till he had been married six months; but when he read or rather repeated it to her and she entered into his conception, she rose in his affection a hundred per cent. They seemed very happy: he is recovering from the bad wound he got at Edward's Ferry, and she was his companion, and nurse, and delight. I was so attracted that I remained with him till after one o'clock.

"Just at three I went by appointment to the President. We discussed when we had met before: he remembered seeing me at Springfield, Illinois, but had forgotten our interview at Brady's. He wanted to know if I had seen Gen. McClellan. I said no. 'I will take off my slippers,' said he, 'and draw on my boots and take you over.' I liked the novelty of the thing. He went through the processes of getting ready, and we walked to McClellan's. The President rang, and began asking the servant if he could see McClellan, and then checked that form of speech, and sent in word, who were waiting to see him. The general came in to us very soon, and we sat talking on indifferent things, the army, the pros-

pect in Tennessee, the railroad recommended by the President from Kentucky south. Of all silent, uncommunicative, reserved men, whom I ever met, the general stands among the first. He is one, who if he thinks deeply keeps his thoughts to himself. However with what I knew before, I was able to extract something; and I shall probably see him again. The President is turning in his thoughts the question of his duty in the event of a slave insurrection; he thinks slavery has received a mortal wound, that the harpoon has struck the whale to the heart. This I am far from being able to see.

"I invited myself to dine with the Hoopers. We had Sumner, and two others. In the evening young Lowell[1] came in, of whom by the way, I spoke at large to McClellan, giving him the praises that are his due. Sumner at once vindicates and censures the ad ministration. After this I called on Gen. Heintzelman, one of the bravest and best soldiers in the army. He was in the Bull's Run fight. I wound up the evening with a long talk with the famous Griffin, of Griffin's batteries, who, if not overvalued by his superior Barry, would have saved the battle of Bull's Run. . . ."

The next day Bancroft wrote of an evening party, the night before, at which he had talked with Prince de Joinville, "whose views," in the words of the letter to Mrs. Bancroft, "pleased me very much, friendly toward us and very discreet; with Mercier,[2] who shows me that

[1] Charles Russell Lowell.

[2] The French Minister at Washington.

France desires the independence total or imperfect of the Southern states, but with a Zollverein between the fragments, an absurd and selfish idea, never to be thought of, and if thought of, impossible to be executed. I talked also with Seward, who looked dirty, rusty, vulgar, and low; used such words as hell, and damn, and spoke very loud. I think better of Mrs. Lincoln for her excessive dislike to him." On the 18th he dined with Seward, and reported: "Seward talked a good deal with me after dinner, almost as a fatalist." Yet Bancroft bore back with him to New York, immediately after these observations, no feelings about Seward which prevented his writing in the following month these letters of friendly import:

To William H. Seward.

"New York, *January* 28, 1862.

"I complain a little, that you have not sent me a copy of the volume which you published of your correspondence in December, and now again, your correspondence in pamphlet form. If you can spare me a copy, pray do so.

"Major Amor, member of parliament, brother of Lord Lichfield and a supporter of Palmerston's has been with me for some days: a young man of a good deal of merit. He told me positively, and as I was sceptical and cross-examined him, he told me clearly and unequivocally, saying 'I know it to be so,'—that early last summer Louis Napoleon had urged England to join or lead in opening the blockade. I had heard this,

and doubted it. He would not admit a doubt to be expressed. He said further, that England would not interfere with the blockade; we might for her do as we like about it. In what related to France, I could not help believing him. What he said was said bluntly and sincerely; in his talk generally, he had the prejudices of the English; and was not talking to suit the taste of his listener.

"I try to hear of something well done by our army. The country is bleeding, as if an artery had been touched; relief must come soon."

To William H. Seward.

"New York, *February 4th*, 1862.

"I have great cause to acknowledge your kindness to me in sending me so nice a copy of your correspondence which I wished so much to possess and which I shall put away in my library as a memorial of our times and of your kindness to me. Posterity will weigh most the affair of the *Trent*, which is destined to be referred to hereafter by every writer on International law. I, for one, approve your taking the matter quietly; I approve exceedingly your wise forethought in notifying the British Government that Wilkes acted without orders; and I thoroughly approve your giving the traitors up to England directly without the intervention of any one. It was the more manly course. There would have been no dignity in submitting to the mediation or interposition of France. It seems now that you are likely to preserve peace with Europe during our struggle with the

rebellion. The *country yearns for decisive action;* and bears up with magnanimity but regret at the repeated disappointments and delays. But you now have a noble army; and means of attack: and I think the acquisition of Virginia and Tennessee must end the matter.

"But henceforward it ought to be understood and avowed, that slavery is no more than tolerated in the Union. Were it to raise its fangs again, how it would strike every one of consideration who has forwarded resistance to the devices of its supporters! I hope you—I mean Congress and the President with his advisers—constitutionally, will this winter end forever slavery in the District of Columbia, as an advertisement to the world, and to every part of our own country that this is really and essentially a government of the free: I had also hoped, that the events of the war would certainly overthrow slavery in all Virginia as well as in Missouri. Slavery must be left in a state of too great weakness to conspire again. The dignity and the tranquility, perhaps even the security of your life, depend upon that; but that I am aware is a minor consideration with you. But I did not mean to weary you; I write to thank you for your very acceptable gift and I remain

"very truly yours

"Geo. Bancroft."

[P. S.] "A letter I have from Paris of January 10, is full of sorrow for the (supposed) destruction of Charleston and Savannah harbours; says it produces a violent sensation. An Englishman of great merit, Dicey, author

of a Life of Cavour, who arrived in the *Africa*, tells me that during the *Trent* excitement, 'every attempt at getting up a war meeting was a dead failure' in England. Lecompte, a Major in the Swiss service, one of the best military officers of Europe goes to Washington today. I rather think he means to write on the *war* side of our controversy: the strategies and tactics of the campaign. He brought me the very best letters, and I gave him none to any one: he says he has letters for McClellan. He is strongly on our side."

At the celebration of Washington's Birthday in 1862 Bancroft delivered at the Cooper Institute, New York, an oration calling upon the government to meet its present problem in the spirit of Washington himself. "The so-called opinion of Taney," and the necessity of exterminating slavery, were special themes of vigorous speech. Near the end of the oration Bancroft quoted Washington's injunction to the nephews who were to receive his swords by will—not to unsheathe them, "except it be for self-defence, or in defence of their country and its rights; and in the latter case to keep them unsheathed, and prefer falling with them in their hands to the relinquishment thereof."

"The President of the United States," Bancroft went on, "has charged us this day to meet and take counsel from the Farewell Address of Washington. We charge him in return, by his oath of office, by his pledges to the country, by the blood that has been shed and the treasure that has been expended, by the security of this generation, by the hopes of the next, by his desire to

stand well with mankind and to be remembered in honour by future ages, to take to his heart this injunction of Washington."[1]

In the following summer Bancroft received from Secretary Chase a manuscript expressing the substance of what he had said in the cabinet when the Secretary of State read his despatch surrendering Mason and Slidell. The postscript to Bancroft's acknowledgment of this communication gives further expression to his belief in the aggressive conduct of the war

To SALMON P. CHASE.

"NEWPORT, R. I., *August* 9, 1862.

"I return the interesting and able paper which you were so good as to allow me to read. I think you were unquestionably right in advising the President to give up Slidell and Mason; and the reason which you assign for your opinion is conclusive. I am even inclined to believe that their character as envoys, did not, according to the true law of nations, expose the *Trent* to capture. Whether different opinions might not be justified by British precedents, is a very different matter; I should have been sorry to see our government asserting the validity of those precedents.

"I am ever, my dear Mr. Chase,

"Very truly your friend,

"GEO. BANCROFT

"P. S. You have the credit, and I hope and believe

[1] See pamphlet, *Oration by George Bancroft on the Twenty-second of February*, 1862, etc. New York: E. I. Barker, 1862.

deservedly, of seeing the true nature of this rebellion which is burdening the free industry of the country with a cloud of debt. The South is bent on a revolution; in revolutions halfway measures always fail. The only way to raise a party for you in Virginia is by the abolition of slavery. The finest portion of our country deserves to produce some better staple than slaves. Tell the President to break up the Virginia trade in slaves by the only measure which can at once crush the traffic and the rebellion. If your administration makes peace, leaving slavery and the domestic slave-trade existing in Virginia, what will the world, what will the next generation say of you? The boldest measures are the safest; the way and the only way to preserve the Union is by abolishing slavery. Look at the imbecility of your pro-slavery McClellan; look at your sham pacification in the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Would to God, we could see disinterested patriotism, a strong will, and a clear perception of the character of this struggle united. The constitution has for its primal object the maintenance of the Union; it entrusted the Government with all power to enact laws necessary and proper for carrying into execution the powers vested in the government; and as the termination of slavery is proper and necessary to that end, Congress and the President in this extreme case of their own life or death, the life and death of the Constitution, should adopt (and has not Congress substantially adopted), the measure of doing away with the institution, which so long as it continues, renders a restoration of the Union impossible. Slavery ought forthwith to be put an end to in Virginia and forever;

and avowedly and openly on the ground that so only can regenerated Virginia be reconciled to the Union."

Still later in the year Bancroft, life-long Democrat as he was, was nominated for Congress by the Republicans of one of the New York districts, and declined the nomination on the ground that, since another candidate had already been nominated, his running would leave the district in doubt. One paragraph in his letter to the Nominating Committee should be read in its relation to Bancroft's early views of Lincoln and the opinion he subsequently came to hold:

"Complaints are made against the Administration; there never was and never will be an administration that does not require to be watched. But the people have chosen their President; and we who preferred another public servant must now consent to give vigour to the man who is the President under the Constitution. To harp upon what is past and gone and irremediable, would be useless; the graver question affecting personal liberty must be settled in such a way as to leave no dangerous precedent. Meantime, we cannot suffer the country to go to pieces because the President has committed errors. Let, then, the voice of this district and this city be distinctly heard in favour of an immediate, vigorous prosecution of the war."

In the next year, 1863, Lincoln consulted Bancroft, apparently on a point of historic precedent for an action under contemplation, and Bancroft replied with abund-

ant information and references. From the files of this year also must be cited another utterance of Bancroft's on the subject of slavery. It occurs in a letter to General Schenck, November 18, 1863:

". . . In thinking of the future, I feel unwilling to rely on the President's proclamation alone for the termination of slavery. Congress has power to make all laws that are necessary to the exercise of its constitutional office. Now slavery has proved itself a deadly enemy to our institutions; is it not then rightfully a subject for legislation? Could not Congress enact, that henceforward every one born in one common country should be born free? When Southern states enacted that every coloured person should be a slave, that the free coloured persons should become slaves, they justified any counter legislation, to make freedom a universal birthright."[1]

Once more Bancroft and Lincoln are seen, if only for a moment, in personal intercourse. In a letter from Washington to Mrs. Bancroft, February 24, 1864, Bancroft wrote: "Last night I went to the President's reception. He took me by the one of his hands, and trying to recall my name, he waved the other a foot and a half above his head, and cried out, greatly to the

[1] "In the Civil War he [Bancroft] took the Northern side through and through, and in conversation and in public, I think, from beginning to end, he never gave in to the assumptions of the slave-holding oligarchy. You cannot be too extreme in your statement of this." From letter of Rev. Dr. Edward Everett Hale to the author, Jan. 20, 1906.

amusement of the by-standers: 'Hold on—I know you; you are—History, History of the United States—Mr.—Mr. Bancroft, Mr. George Bancroft,' and seemed disposed to give me a hearty welcome—expressing a wish to see me some day apart from the crowd. S—— wanted Abe's autograph in a copy of his Gettysburg speech; finding him so good-natured, I asked for it; and he very readily promised it."

Only one more letter of the war-period need be given:

To Samuel S. Cox.

"New York, *January* 28, 1865.

"You and I stood together with Douglas against the outrageous attempt to force slavery upon Texas. I read your speech the other day, and think your argument perfectly sound, that the removal of slavery may be effected by an amendment of the Constitution. Our friend Pendleton's question, whether a power exists to establish slavery everywhere, is, *first*, as foolish as to ask if the amendment could be made denying in a bill of rights every one of the commandments—and, *secondly*, the power to establish slavery everywhere was not contemplated by men who formed a union 'to establish justice and secure the blessings of liberty.'

"I write today in full recollection of the noble battle which we fought together against the atrocious attack on the liberties of Texas. Let me now most earnestly entreat you and advise with you, to record your vote in favour of the Amendment of the Constitution for removing the cause of this rebellion.

"It is the part of justice. It is the part of peace; nothing else will quiet the South; when the matter is fixed, they will see what they must renounce and will acquiesce. The measure is the only one which can restore prosperity to the South; punish slavery, and then we can cherish the former slaveholder. The use of slave labour, as you know, locked the gates of the South against the free labourer; remove slavery, and the tide of free labour will rush towards the South with a surprising swiftness. In ten years Virginia will be more peopled and richer, than she ever was before. Texas will be our Italy.

"We Democrats are right on the coming financial question and the country knows it. You cannot present the issue of the finances till the Slavery question is settled, and that question can be settled but in one way. Do away with slavery and the Democrats will be borne into power on the wings of their sound principles of finance.

"You may jar on a few: you will come into public life again, if you do but sustain this amendment. The progress of opinion on the subject is truly wonderful; the removal of slavery is now looked upon here as the wisest counsel of conservatism.

"Do not, my friend, let your name be registered as one who defeats this measure. It will stand out to all time: and your children, and your friends, and your political supporters, and you yourself would regret it, almost as soon as your vote should be recorded.

"You know I have no fanaticism. I view this matter

calmly, bringing out and applying the rules which history furnishes and which all are fixed and immutable as the laws of the material universe. The path of wisdom, of patriotism, of peace, of future success, leads now through the abolition of slavery by an amendment of the Constitution.

"Listen to what I say, and if you take the advice of one who may plead his age in excuse of his importunity, you will soon own me to be the best friend and counsellor you ever had in your life."[1]

The end of the war was now near at hand, the death of Lincoln impending. The immediate impression of these events upon Bancroft is not a matter of record known to the present biographer. But their final impression is fully set forth and preserved. When the time came for celebrating formally at Washington the calamity of Lincoln's death, the committee of both houses of Congress which had charge of the matter, turned first to Secretary Stanton for the desired address, and when he declined to deliver it, chose Bancroft to pronounce, as he had done after the death of Andrew Jackson in 1845, the official eulogy upon the dead President.[2] The difference was that in 1845 Bancroft

[1] This letter has been printed in Professor Sloane's *Century* article.

[2] A telegram from Stanton, dated January 9, 1866, and preserved in Bancroft's files reads as follows: "Your note received. Regard for my health required me to decline what would otherwise have been felt an imperative duty. You ought to perform it, and what you have already done is a preparation and not an objection. You shall have every assistance in my power."

was himself a member of a Democratic cabinet. The similarity between the two occasions lay in the spectacle of the foremost scholar in public life eulogising first one then the other of our two Presidents who had least in common with the scholarly class. The *Memorial Address on the Life and Character of Abraham Lincoln* was delivered in the House of Representatives at Washington, February 12, 1866. As a piece of writing it is highly characteristic of its author—moving at times with a mid-Victorian pomp, and again with a nervous vigour and quickness which make it as effective to read as it must have been to hear. Writing to Mrs. Bancroft on the very night of its delivery Bancroft said: "The drollest thing was at a part of my speech, when in enumerating the opinions of Lincoln, the radicals would applaud vehemently at one part and the friends of Johnson at the other, and so it went on for several sentences; it was like touching the different keys of a piano, each sending its note at the touch." Bancroft well knew in advance that not all of the speech would be agreeable to all its possible hearers, and, as the following letter will show, took pains to insure the absence of the British Minister. There was more reason for this course than the letter to Mr. Adams suggests, for perhaps the most dramatic portion of the speech consisted of two printed pages near its end, devoted to scathing comparisons between Lincoln and Lord Palmerston, whose death had followed six months after Lincoln's. The letter to Mr. Adams sufficiently explains the circumstances which called it forth:

To CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

"NEW YORK, *March* 23, 1866.

"I have received from you, by Lord Russell's desire, a copy of his letter to you of 28 February last, in which he denies the truth of certain allegations in my address to Congress on the Twelfth of the same month. The passage which he cites contains these three allegations: That as British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he viewed this Republic as *'the late Union';* that he sent this view of our country through the palaces of Europe; and that he made haste to do so. When Lord Russell calls to mind the authority for these statements, he must acknowledge them to be perfectly just and true.

"On the sixth day of May, 1861, Lord John Russell, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, wrote a despatch to Lord Lyons in which de describes the condition of America as *'the disruption of a confederacy,'* and he further used these words: *'Civil war has broken out between the several states of the late Union.—The government of the Southern portion has duly constituted itself.—Her Majesty's Government do not wish you to make any mystery of that view.'* Here is irrefragable proof of my first allegation.

"On the day on which the Minister of the Queen thus wrote, he addressed a despatch to Lord Cowley, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, designating our Republic as *'the States which lately composed the American Union'; 'the late United States'; 'the late Union';* and he enclosed in that despatch, for Lord

Cowley's instruction, a copy of the above cited letter to Lord Lyons. Having thus ostentatiously communicated his view of our Country as '*the late Union*,' he asked in return, '*to be made acquainted with the views of the Imperial Government.*' My second allegation is therefore true, in letter and in spirit.

"That Lord John Russell as Secretary of State was in haste to do this, appears from his not having awaited the arrival of the American Minister of Mr. Lincoln's appointment, and from those very letters of the sixth of May 1861, to Lord Cowley and to Lord Lyons; for in those letters he confesses that he had not as yet '*received from Lord Lyons any report of the state of affairs and of the prospects of the several parties*'; but that on coming to the decision which was so momentous and unprecedented, he acted on the reports of '*some consuls*,' and '*of the public prints.*'

"It is true that twenty-four days after Lord John Russell had officially described our country as '*the disruption of a confederacy*,' '*the late Union*,' he reproved a member of the House of Commons for openly exulting '*that the great Republican bubble in America had burst*'; and owned '*that the republic had been for many years a great and free state*'; but he uttered no expectation or hope of the restoration of our Union, and rather intimated that the Americans were '*about to destroy each others' happiness and freedom.*' Lord John, on that occasion, rightly attributed the rebellion to the '*accursed institution of Slavery*,' and confessed that England was the giver of '*the poisoned garment*'; that the former governments of Great Britain were '*themselves to blame*

for the origin of the evil.' But this confession must be interpreted by the light of his averments on the sixth of May 1861, and by Lord Russell's later assertion, that the efforts of our country were but a contest for 'empire.'

"In speaking to the American Congress of the life and character of Abraham Lincoln, it was my unavoidable duty to refer to the conduct of the British Government towards our country during his administration; for nothing so wounded his feelings, or exercised his judgment, or tried his fortitude.[1]

"I was asked to address the two houses of our Congress, and those only. When I learned that the British Minister at Washington was likely to be one of my hearers, I requested Mr. Seward to advise him not to be present; and through another friend, I sent him a similar message, which he received and perfectly understood.

"I need not recall words of ninety years ago, to be persuaded that in peace America and the United Kingdom should be friends. I have a right to say this; for when in the public service, I proved it by public acts;

[1] In an undated letter from George Bancroft to Charles Sumner, in the Sumner Collection of Mss., Harvard College Library, I find the following: "You once told me that you never heard Mr. Lincoln pronounce a severe judgment against anyone but once; that when he read Lord Russell's letter on the Emancipation Proclamation he was wounded to the quick, and said of Russell: 'That man does not love truth,' or something stronger. Call up the matter in your memory, and let me have Lincoln's words exactly as he uttered them.

"Not that I mean certainly to use the anecdote. Still less that I would quote your name and authority, but to know the ground exactly."

and as a private citizen I have never wished our government to demand of a foreign power anything but justice.

"Pray send Lord Russell a copy of this letter, which he is at liberty to publish; and I consider myself equally at liberty to publish his letter, to which this is a reply."

A recent discovery by Professor William A. Dunning of Columbia University has brought to light the curious fact that Bancroft's words, though not his voice, had on a very important occasion about nine weeks before the delivery of the Lincoln oration, received the careful attention of both houses of Congress. The occasion was the reading of Andrew Johnson's first annual message, December 4, 1865; and the discovery, entirely fresh in 1905, was that Bancroft wrote the document.[1] The proof of Professor Dunning's discovery is found in the Johnson papers which he had been examining in the Library of Congress. Letters from Bancroft to Johnson pointed to some momentous and confidential transaction between the two men. What established the matter beyond a doubt was the finding of a draft, in Bancroft's own handwriting, of the message in virtually its final form. To confirm the discovery, Bancroft's personal files are found to contain telegrams from Johnson in the fall of 1865 which accord perfectly with the transaction described. Still more significant is a letter from Johnson, October 29, 1865, enclosing an extract from Jefferson's Inaugural of 1801 and another from a speech of Charles James Fox in 1797. Near the

[1] See "A Little More Light on Andrew Johnson," by William A. Dunning, *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, 1905, p. 395.

end of the letter Johnson writes: "You will see the best use to make of these references if any, and will dispose of them accordingly." In Johnson's message quotations from both of these extracts appear.

Professor Dunning has shown with what surprise and delight the message was received as an evidence either of Johnson's own ability or of his wisdom in entrusting the expression of his views to so wise a statesman as, probably, Seward. The explanation of his committing it, actually, to Bancroft, the discoverer was disposed to find "in a consideration of Bancroft's political past and of Johnson's projects for a political future." The unwavering Democrat of unwavering faith in the Union and the Constitution seemed, to the Johnson of 1865, the ideal vehicle of his views. The wonder is not only that the two men could keep their secret so well at the time, but that for forty years it remained hidden from the many students of the period.

That Johnson stood ready to meet his personal and political obligation, though at first in a form unacceptable to Bancroft, the files of correspondence give proof. On February 11, 1867, Bancroft wrote to President Johnson: "I see in the papers, that you, in your friendly regard for me, have sent my name to the senate for the office of Collector of Boston. The law makes residence in Boston a condition of the tenure; and I am not willing to transfer my home to that city even if otherwise the office were agreeable to me." It is indeed surprising that Johnson could have thought such a thing possible. But Bancroft waited only three months longer for that which opened the door to one of

the most agreeable and honourable episodes of his life. On May 18, 1867, he wrote to the President:

"Yesterday I received a fresh instance of your thought for me in the commission to Berlin. It is the only office in your gift which I could accept with satisfaction; and in doing so I hope to be able to promote the interest and honour of the government. The German language is almost as familiar to me as English; my studies have made me familiar with Prussian history, and the present tendency of Germany to unity interests me exceedingly. I feel sure of a kind reception, and though the climate is very severe, I shall hope we may find our residence agreeable, and I shall do all that is in my power to make it useful to the country and satisfactory to your administration."

"The labour of the historian," says Professor Dunning at the end of the paper already cited, . . . "met with an entirely adequate personal reward in his appointment as Minister to Berlin in 1867. In this position he was retained by President Grant until 1874. To one who is aware of the feeling toward Johnson in the Senate in 1867 and in Grant in 1869, it will always be a matter of curious speculation whether Bancroft would have been confirmed by the one authority or retained in office by the other if it had been known that he was the author of Andrew Johnson's first annual message." Be that as it may, the appointment and the continuance in office were amply justified by their results.

VIII

MINISTER AT BERLIN,

1867—1874

To the student of history, made and in the making, the seven years through which Bancroft represented the United States at Berlin stand forth as perhaps the most significant in the annals of modern Germany. In the year of Bancroft's arrival the North German Confederation had taken the place of the old Germanic Confederation. Three years later the Franco-Prussian War was fought and won. In 1871 the constitution of the present German Empire came into effect. In the three remaining years of Bancroft's ministry the new order was finding and justifying itself.

All this would have interested any observer of political affairs. It may fairly be questioned whether any American could have brought to the observation and to the direction of our international relations with Germany a truer sympathy and understanding than Bancroft. Not only did his early training at Göttingen and Berlin equip him for his task; there was, besides, in his very nature a peculiar sympathy with German habits of thought and life. The resulting attitude toward the German spirit assured him a cordial acceptance at Berlin. He was at once received into the inner circles of scholarly, social, and political life—circles which

happily overlapped and intersected each other. He remained long enough to take a definite place in the society of Berlin and to leave a definite and widely deplored gap upon his departure.

The record of Bancroft's life during these seven years is fully preserved in his own letters; and, as in the previous chapters dealing with his experiences abroad, there seems no better course than to select from his overflowing correspondence the most significant letters. The first of them, written in New York harbour, June 15, 1867, to Secretary Seward, begins: "The Pilot is at the helm, the ship swings from her moorings; and my last word must be to bid farewell to you and the President. We had taken passage for Hamburg, and I expected to have been presented to the King of Prussia within twenty days; but I cheerfully followed your instructions." These instructions directed him to take Madrid on the way to Berlin, and give unofficial and informal attention to the discussion between Mr. Hale, the American representative at Madrid, and the Spanish Government on the subject of ceding the West Indian islands of Culebra and Culebrita to the United States. Accordingly he visited the Spanish peninsula before going to Berlin. On the way to Spain he wrote the following letter:

To PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

"Private.

"PARIS, 1 *July*, 1867.

"My instructions bringing me through Paris, I seized the opportunity of a short rest after the voyage to

visit my old friends in this city. I met with the most cordial welcome on all sides. The first word of M. Thiers was an inquiry after you, and an emphatic statement that your clemency towards Jefferson Davis had won for you in the esteem of all Europe, and had made many converts to republicanism. I said I shall write that to the President; and he repeated his words; that your treatment of Jefferson Davis had given you a very high place in the esteem of the best men in all Europe, and had *made many republicans, made many republicans,* repeating the words, so as to fix my attention. Such a remark from Thiers is very significant.

"In another quarter a person of celebrity, though not equal in reputation to Thiers, and who, during the war, was strongly on our side, assured me, that our suppression of the rebellion had established republicanism in European opinion; and that the fact of our success having been followed by forbearance towards the rebels individually but by inexorable severity towards the system which caused the rebellion, had endeared our institutions more than ever to the friends of liberty in Europe and more than ever commanded the respect and admiration of all moderate men.

"I have seen enough here to convince me that the dread of democratic institutions has very much worn off in the minds of the president and statesmen of this country; and that thoughtful men now look to a republic if not altogether with favour with less apprehension than heretofore."

Returning from Spain, whence there were letters to

Mrs. Bancroft from Madrid, Seville, Alhambra, Valencia, Barcelona and other places, Bancroft wrote to Seward from Paris, July 27, a full account of the Spanish government and of general conditions in the country, and, three days later, set forth the advantages of commercial relations between the United States and Portugal. By this time, however, Berlin was near at hand. The first manuscript having to do with Bancroft's life there is dated August 17, 1867, and endorsed "Bismarck." The greater portion of it follows:

"On Saturday evening August 17, 1867, at about twenty minutes past nine [Bismarck] came in. We happened all to be sitting together, my wife and I, my stepson[1] and Mrs. Bliss. A few minutes passed in salutations, presently the conversation turned on Spain. He had himself been in no part of Spain, he said, but the North, and what impressed him most seemed to have been the jealousy of the Spaniards towards foreigners. He had been only in St. Sebastian in the North as far as Bilboa, everywhere he found the same jealousy of foreigners. I mentioned something that had happened in Barcelona. After a concert a marvel [lously] beautiful and very large book came and was given to a favourite singer, and she made an offering of it [at] the shrine of the Virgin Mary. There it remained for a time till the priests discovered by whom it had been offered. They then attached it to a rope and six of them dragged it up and down the streets of

[1] Col. Alexander Bliss of the American Legation at Berlin while Bancroft was Minister.

Barcelona. B. said something of the same kind had happened to himself. Once travelling in the south of France a party came to rest in the night in a Carthusian convent. It was dark, there were four or five of them, and one was a woman. The outer gateway opened to them and they all went in. But on discovering that there was a woman among them they were turned back. The woman was disposed of at some place in the village. The men returned to the convent. There they found priests with censors swinging them briskly to fumigate the air and purify it from the contamination of a woman.

"Conversation turned upon races.

"B. said that he had a theory of his own and would discriminate the races as males and females, the Germans as the male race, the strongest and most capable of application of mind, the female race as including the Celts and Slavonians. To my remark that in Russia there [were] some million of civilised Slavs, he said 'yes' and that they might still be discriminated notwithstanding the intermixture, they might still be distinguished by their stature, ease of movement and litheness. He did not consider that nation the best which had no intermixture; as to Germany—there were tides of emigration, ebbing and flowing; he considered the inhabitants to be best capable of long continued efforts and steady purposes, but parts like Suabia had from the nature of the country been left on one side of the currents of emigration; he regarded it as inhabited by a race of men unfit for the conduct of public affairs, defective in judgment, and energy, producing a series of

emperors like the Hohenstaufens. He cited also Schiller as one of that class. I asked about Goethe's origin. He thought it a mixed German. I asked about Leibnitz, he thought Leibnitz might have a dash of Slavonic blood as the termination of his name was 'itz' which was a Slavonic termination.

"To the pure unmixed Russian he denied the power of close and continuous application. Three or four hours a day was the most of intellectual work that could be got out of any of them. An attempt was lately made to remove the Germans from their places in the administration and substitute Russians, but it became necessary to undo the change and restore the Germans. 'I once said,' said he, 'to Prince Gorshacov,[1] "you owe your ability to work fifteen hours a day to your having had a German woman for your mother."'

"It was mentioned that the election of the German parliament was soon to take place, I said that in the United States the respect for Christianity was so great that a candidate who should declare himself against the Christian religion, unless by chance he were a Jew, would be sure to fail; that he might avow himself of any one of the varieties of Christian sects, of those which were the freest and the nearest to the line of a total rejection of Christianity, but a direct rejection of Christianity altogether by one who could not, like the Jew, plead an inherited faith, would ruin the chances of a candidate for election. B. said he was sorry to be obliged to say that it was not so in Germany, that there were districts where even an avowal of atheism would

[1] Alexander Michaelovitch Gortchakoff (1798–1883).

not interfere with the political chances of a candidate. He spoke at some length of infidelity and atheism as the result of shallow habits of thought, which larger study and severer reflection were sure to rectify. 'When I left the University,' said he, 'I was *athée* and republican,' and he seemed to speak as if he thought the two at least in Germany, went very naturally together. He said that there was but one point on which the Prussian election would admit of no uncertainty. No man could get chosen to any parliament in Prussia who should before the electors set himself against the principle of monarchy or against the right of the present royal family. . . .

"The visit lasted about an hour and a half. It was nearly eleven o'clock when he went away,—later than half past ten.

"He spoke English with energy and very great choice of expression, but not with perfect fluency."

After this friendly beginning of relations with Bismarck, Bancroft's participation in the many-sided life of Berlin went rapidly forward. Selections from his letters, in chronological sequence, will relate nearly all his experiences.

To William H. Seward.

"Berlin, *August* 29, 1867.

"Yesterday a little before two o'clock in the afternoon, Count Bismarck called for me, and took me to the king's country residence at Babelsberg, this side of

Potsdam, where I was to be received in a private audience. As soon as we entered the palace, the count presented me to the king, to whom I delivered my letter of credentials from the President in the simplest manner, and without any speech. The king at once opened a conversation and remained conversing with me, expressing of himself his satisfaction at the perfectly friendly relations which had ever existed between the two countries, and making inquiries respecting the President. Afterwards he spoke of several of my predecessors asking about them or their families even as far back as the time of Mr. Wheaton[1] and Mr. Donelson.[2] Dinner was soon served, and the place assigned me at table was next to the king. The party was of twelve: the conversation was certainly marked by respect for the sovereign, but was wholly free from stiffness and formality, and conversation was as easy and unrestrained as at the house of a country gentleman. After dinner the king, again came to me and his words and his manner expressed everything that could be wished, alike in the way of regard for my country and of courtesy to me as its representative.

"On returning to the railroad station, it appeared that the king was also on his way to Berlin. He beckoned to me to enter his private car and to take the seat nearest him; and conversed all the way to the city so that during the day I was in his company for about three hours. This reception while it was very agreeable to me per-

[1] Henry Wheaton, United States Minister at Berlin, 1835–1846.

[2] Andrew Jackson Donelson, United States Minister at Berlin, 1846–1849.

sonally, pleased me more as an evidence of the ever increasing consideration for the Government of the United States. . . .

"The circular from the Department on the subject of uniform was duly received, and I have conformed to it exactly, wearing in my audience with the king precisely the same dress which I should have worn if on an invitation from the President." [1]

To William H. Seward.

"Berlin, *September* 10, 1867.

"This day has been one of the greatest interest in the history of Germany, being marked by the organisation of the first Imperial diet assembled under the new constitution of North Germany. The protestant members of the parliament met in advance for religious service in the king's chapel. The king, the crown prince and princess and other members of the royal family, the chiefs of the diplomatic corps and the great officers of the state and of the army were present, and were all seated on the floor of the chapel. The glitter of official uni-

[1] *A propos* of court uniform, Lord Lytton tells the story of a passage between Lord Augustus Loftus, British Ambassador at Berlin, and Bancroft. Loftus, before many listeners, asked Bancroft why the American representatives appeared at court "all dressed in black, like so many undertakers." To which Bancroft retorted with surprise that the ambassador of the Queen of England "should have failed to perceive that we could not be more appropriately dressed than we are—at European courts, where what we represent is the Burial of Monarchy." See *Personal and Literary Letters of Robert, First Earl of Lytton*, I, p. 248.

forms was as great as I ever saw, there being but one person in plain clothes among all those who were invited to attend. The services were appropriate and implied the assurance that the movement toward union as yet incomplete has proceeded thus far with the favour of providence.

"The catholic members of the diet held their service apart.

"After these exercises were over the diet repaired to the White Hall, remaining standing. The king as he entered and took his seat was heartily cheered. The proceedings were in conformity to the usage of constitutional governments. The president minister put into the king's hands the speech which he was to read when the king rising from the throne, put on his helmet and read the speech in a clear and simple manner without emphasis or display, or any attempt at theatrical effect. At the close of the speech and as the king withdrew he was again warmly cheered.

"I enclose an official copy of the speech.

"The points in it to which I would especially direct your attention are the second paragraph which implies that there is a German nation including the South German provinces as well as the North; that the measures thus far taken for the commercial union with the German states is but 'a step' though an 'important' one; and that 'the German feeling' has been an instrument of happy political activity. It also merits remark that the constitution is described as a work of peace, of which the advantages are to be enjoyed in peace."

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.[1]

"Berlin, 13 *December*, 1867.

"At the house of the Ambassadors of France and England and the ministers of Turkey and Belgium, there are soirees, once a week at each house. My letter was well on the way towards Bremen when I went to the Turk's. He is a Greek christian and his wife a Prussian of Prussians, sensible, well bred and amiable. I have forgotten who were there, except only that the most beautiful was the Countess Wimpfen, wife of the Austrian minister. She is of the Milo Venus style, tall, a neck like a swan's and Βαθύκολπος, which John must translate, if you have forgotten your Greek.

"Saturday at ¼ before four I had my Antritts Audienz, official audience of the Queen. We both stood, and were in tête-a-tête, for her women stopped at the open door. If ever in the world a man was fed upon honey, my time for it was now come. Oil did not flow more bountifully down Aaron's beard. Glad I was come to Berlin; known in every land; the king had written her of his pleasure at receiving me, that I was member of the Academy[2] and all the members had joined in giving me a welcome; that I was known to her as an author and she was told the two last volumes were the most interesting, these she should read and in spite of my

[1] It will be seen that Mrs. Davis, the wife of Bancroft's nephew, who became his immediate successor as United States Minister to Berlin, was the correspondent to whom Bancroft wrote perhaps most fully and often in this period.

[2] In February, 1845, Bancroft had been elected a Corresponding Member of the Prussian Royal Academy of Sciences.

crying out, pray don't, insisted that she would. She spoke (always in the most excellent English, which she preferred to use, though she was aware I knew German) in the warmest admiration of my country; and with sympathy for the sorrows of our terrible war; of Americans in Berlin; of their having been no doubt attracted by me; of Weimar; of her brother's care to improve his little principality and make it the best that its moderate resources would permit. 'I am old enough,' I said, 'to have seen Goethe.' 'And I too' she said 'am old enough to have seen Goethe' and she confessed her age naturally and simply. I said Goethe had spoken to me of Berlin in proud terms as the König's-stadt; were he alive now he might say Kaiser-stadt. She answered with the greatest moderation; that peace was to be desired above all and maintained; that nothing must be hurried; and repeated again and again her love of peace. The present state of Germany must not be changed suddenly. I told her, the present state of Prussia was the result of the action of causes that had been at work continuously for more than three hundred years. Now I have narrated what happened; and of course you know that I know that the sugared words were what the Queen said as Queen on a first reception, when she always studies to show that she is not ignorant of the claims the person presented may have to her esteem, and is amiable enough to create them if they do not exist, and to see them through a rose coloured magnifying glass if they do.

"Sunday I attended service as usual at our American chapel, where we have very good preaching, for nearly a

half dozen American clergymen are passing the winter in Berlin, and they take turns. Of Americans there are near three hundred here, for Germany proves attractive to them. In the evening it grew cold; the mercury between sunset and nine ran down to $8\frac{1}{2}$ degrees of cold, Réaumur. Now brush up your learning; for don't imagine I intend to turn $8\frac{1}{2}$ minus of Réaumur into 13 of Fahrenheit above zero.

"Monday, why that is a long time ago, what did I do on Monday? Bismarck spoke in the chamber of Deputies, and S—— was wise enough to be there; I missed the occasion. At dinner Lepsius came and invited me to an anniversary meeting of the Winckelmann Association of Artists, celebrating W's birthday. The hall of meeting was at Arnim's Hotel; the members present about fifty, besides guests. Essays were read and spoken, by one whose name I have lost, by Lepsius on Egyptian statues and busts; especially the development of Egyptian art as shown in the delineation of features; by Waagen on the new acquisitions of the British Museum. After the feast of reason we had a good supper according to Berlin usage, where evening entertainments more prevail, the company seating themselves at more tables than one, and it may be in more rooms than one.

"Tuesday I was at the Foreign office. Director von Philipsborn[1] described to me Bismarck's mode of working. He gives out work to able men; and then reviews

[1] In a letter of the next month, "Mr. von Philipsborn" is described as "one of the Assistant Secretaries of State, director he is called."

what is done. He hates to converse with a foreign minister on a topic of which he is not thoroughly master, and postpones his interview, till he is himself ready. He attends to great measures, neglects small things, takes no heed of them, and, by the way, for this he is not greater but less. Frederic the Great, Washington, Wellington neglected no detail; the greatest men are great in their attention to the minutest things not less than to general considerations. Bismarck reads through a paper at a glance; sees instantly the central idea on which the decision is to turn; discerns a flaw in an argument intuitively; dashes down a short incisive note alongside a paper, and his note is terse and full of meaning. He is by nature vehement; and can be irritable and impatient. In the evening I went to the French Ambassador's and, by the way, the whole diplomatic corps have received me very cordially.

"Bunsen, one of the sons of my old friend chevalier Bunsen, occupies the étage above us. He came in on Wednesday while we were at breakfast to tell me Bismarck would certainly, must certainly, speak on that day as his policy, that is one small act of it, was to be impugned. The Prince of Waldeck, ruler over 40 to 50 thousand inhabitants, has sold out his jurisdiction to the king of Prussia; question: shall the land henceforward, be administered as a separate principality, or be incorporated body and soul into the Prussian Monarchy? Bismarck for the first, the liberals for the absorption. Bismarck took his seat at the table of the ministers of state; heard the argument against him by the chairman

of the committee with seeming unconcern, and rose to reply. He is nothing of an orator. He spoke not without hesitation; moving his body backwards and forwards, holding a lead pencil in his hand and moving it about in both hands but making his statement clearly and concisely, viz: Waldeck was a constituent principality in the North German union and could not without breach of faith to the union be absorbed, though its jurisdiction might be devolved on another, and in perpetuity. Twesten, a famous liberal, very able and perhaps the best speaker in the house replied. Then Bismarck grew warm. The words hurried out of his mouth very fast, and seemingly still faster out of his mind; and to carry the day he touched the chord of German nationality, and sat down in the midst of a whirlwind of bravos. But he had no rhetoric and no manner. His force was simply that of a vehement statement. He carried the day after some more sparring.

"Among the hearers seated next to me were Ernest Bunsen and his English wife, a Gurney, and their lovely daughters, and Mrs. Bunsen wife of my *neighbour* or rather *superior*. All agreed I had seen and heard Bismarck to advantage; and his manner was, just what it is in private—only that he spoke standing instead of sitting. In the evening I went to the opera. It was the Lucca's last night, before her departure for Petersburg, whither the king had good-naturedly consented she should go; she having received large offers from the emperor. The singers and actors here are official people; appointed for life; and pensioned when they

grow old. Every seat was taken, every place to stand was filled. Yet though bouquets were thrown, the audience from which I had expected wild enthusiasm, was calmer than usual, encoring her songs, but not able to get the better of the feeling of regret that she was to leave, so here was a new form of homage, sorrow at departure quelling the overflow of joy at the delight of the moment.

"Meantime wonderful to tell—the great event—the occasion for which the best Paris gown, the loveliest head-dress, and most careful preparation were duly made. The queen sent word, she would see Mrs. Bancroft. So my wife punctually at the moment, 7 in the evening, was ushered into her presence and for the first time saw Prussian female royalty, face to face; and I as I returned, had an account of the interview. All I can speak for, is, that Mrs. B. was perfectly well dressed, she and the queen sat together on a sofa. Thursday we went to dine at the French Ambassador's. Here was Madame Aristarchi, the Turk's wife, and now Doyenne of the Diplomatic corps. She introduced another lady the same evening, in which my wife was presented. She reported to me, that the queen made very pleasant remarks about Mrs. B. as I do not doubt she did.

"At the dinner 36 were seated; not quite half the guests were ladies: and I as the *youngest* member of the corps went to dinner alone. The ladies were splendidly attired. My beautiful countess Wimpfen sat just near enough to me to make me wish to talk with her and hold it a possibility; and just so far that it would have been a

venturesome experiment. Next sat a person in woman's clothes, but she was not a woman, she was an unmitigated John Bull. After dinner we went to Baron Nothomb's[1] the Belgian and the cleverest man in the corps. Mrs. B. was soon tired; and we went home early and to bed."

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"Berlin, 27 *December*, 1867.

"I forgot in my last letter to say that on Tuesday evening the 17th, we were at an evening party at the historian Ranke's, who is here regarded for style and research the 'matadore.' The entertainment was a cup of most excellent tea; and after it cake and a glass of light Rhenish or claret. In one room we talked: in the next room we listened to the best of music, well performed, by persons neither young nor fair; but performed with skill and feeling. It is something new to see a matron well advanced sit down to play the best of Beethoven; and another lady almost as old sing with taste and feeling and good execution, simply because they both love music dearly, and were surrounded by persons who wished to hear them. The culture of music here is exceedingly great and forms an element in social character. There is no affectation. A lady will tell you how much she loves music, that she sings but only in the chorus; and that to do so is part of her happiness in life. The best oratorios are sung by persons of

[1] Jean Baptiste, Baron von Nothomb, 1805–1881, Belgian Minister at Berlin, 1845–1881.

society;- and the taste for music and its culture are universal. Ranke seemed not to care much for it. He was very kind to me; running over in his mind all the collections of Mss. he has made and trying to think of papers that might be of use to me. One day when I met him, for he is a great walker, believing in outward air and motion as the medicines of life, he gave an arch twinkle to his eyes and said 'Do you know what I say of you to my classes?' Of course I did not. 'And will you not be angry if I tell you?' And then he continued: 'I tell my hearers, that your history is the best book ever written from the democratic point of view. You are thoroughly consistent; adhere strictly to your method, carry it out in many directions but in all with fidelity, and are always true to it.' I am not certain if this is high praise; for ask yourself what books have been written from the democratic point of view? and then again consider if it is not rather a hard judgment to say that a book is written from a democratic point of view. I deny the charge; if there is democracy in the history it is not subjective, but objective as they say here, and so has necessarily its place in history and gives its colour as it should. . . .

"Tuesday we had our Christmas tree, for my wife's little grandson, now ten months old; and we called in to our Christmas tree all the servants with their wives and children, making all glad by a harvest of presents. Later we went up to our friends the George von Bunsens when our own family and that of his brother Ernest celebrated Christmas eve with abundant good cheer and hilarity. All of us received a present, mine a

photograph of the house we live in,[1] but giving no idea of its charming situation as the Park on which it lies is left out of view, and only the street given. It was a charming scene; first Christmas hymns were sung; then at a signal the doors were thrown open, and the children first, and the grown people last marched into the large room, that was lighted up by candles on the Christmas tree and glittered with the presents that loaded the tables. After this, there was a supper and music: Händel and Mendelssohn, and altogether the hours passed delightfully, the children being wild with happiness."

The following letter stands apart from most of those which Bancroft wrote from Berlin, in that it defines, perhaps more fully than any other single statement from him, his position regarding the crucial points in American political affairs in the period of which the Civil War was the central event.

To Reverdy Johnson.

"Berlin, *January* 2, 1868.

"I was very glad that you were so good as to send me your two pamphlets, which I had already read in the newspapers. I regard your view of the right of Maryland to regulate its own constitution as in accordance with the constitution of the U. S. and as it seems to me with the judgment of the country. The action of Congress in putting at rest the question of impeachment

[1] 1, Regenten Strasse, on the corner directly giving on the Thiergarten.

which had disturbed not the United States only but had exceedingly agitated the public mind of Europe, was consistently wise and right. Altogether the effect has been excellent both in regard to the credit of our finances and confidence in the principle of republicanism.

"It is always necessary to keep freshly in memory theoretic truth in its utmost purity and to conform institutions to it as nearly as possible but nothing is perfect which is the work of man, and the radical who makes war upon everything in which he can discern a fault becomes a destructive, his hand is against every established institution and while he may be of service when it is proper to overthrow, he never knows how to spare or how to rebuild. These are the considerations that led me to the views that have governed my life in questions of practical politics. I hold it necessary to keep bright in our recollections the eternal principles of justice, but instead of warring against all existing institutions I hold that the wise statesman does not attempt impossibilities but decides every question as it presents itself on the side of freedom and in this manner assists to bring the actual state nearer and nearer to the best possible state. Hence in the desire to postpone the contest between the North and the South, slavery and anti-slavery, I like yourself opposed the election of Frémont, convinced as I was that had he been elected he could not have carried on the government much less have promoted the reform. Again, in the desire to postpone the contest between Slavery and Anti-slavery and in the conviction that the postponement of the question for a few years would alone render a peaceful

settlement of it possible, I like yourself seven years ago desired the election of Douglas to the Presidency. When war unhappily broke out, I saw at a very early day that it could be ended only by the abolition of slavery and governed myself accordingly. The emancipation of three or four millions of slaves and the conferring upon them all civil rights of person and property seemed to me as it did to you a great moral achievement, and I never dared to raise my voice for the immediate and universal endowment of the freedmen with the franchise of electors. At the same time it seemed to me wise to leave the attainment of the elective franchise within the reach of every freedman. Objectionable as it may seem in theory I was of the opinion after much reflection that a property qualification for them was that which could most readily be acquired and applied; hence I thought that when Mr. Lincoln and General Banks undertook to fashion a government for Louisiana while war was still raging, it would have been well for them to have admitted to suffrage coloured persons possessed of a moderate tangible amount of property; but though South Carolina had carried her forbearance so far as to give the suffrage to the Octoroon, Banks would not propose a qualified suffrage for the coloured man and so missed the opportunity of making the rule which has prevailed in New York for more than forty years the mode of settling the question of the elective franchise in the South. I deplored the failure and from that time have looked on with the deepest and most anxious interest but no longer able to give advice. I most sincerely hope, that the policy adopted may prove a

successful one; but as in the period of our revolutionary war and after it there were enthusiasts for gradual emancipation, so I believe that while it would be just and right to give the suffrage to the blacks in the free states where they have been free for more than a generation the best policy for the South would have been to give at once the suffrage to the most intelligent of the coloured race; and to extend it by degrees as the rest, in this generation or the next, should have become educated and manifestly capable of exercising their right with discretion. Perhaps you in Maryland may be able to inaugurate this better system.

"With regard to the future moderate counsels must prevail. Contending parties may push their points of difference to extremes; but the power of moderation is the highest power as well as the special characteristic of the great statesman. My hope for the future is that the administration of affairs may by the coming elections be placed securely in the hands of those who took an unequivocal part with their country in suppressing the late rebellion, but who at the same time will conduct the government with clemency and moderation. Here in Prussia Bismarck is the man of all others who stands out as the first man now living on the continent of Europe, and while he is preëminently distinguished for the clear perception of his designs, the adaptation of means to his ends and the pursuit of his ends with momentous and invincible vehemence he is above all most remarkable for his power of moderating himself, his country and its government in the season and high tide of success."

with prologue and all; and it was given exceedingly well. Grimm smiled; his wife (Bettina's daughter), overflowed with spirit and all went merry as a marriage bell.

"I am a member of a Wednesday evening society composed of sixteen regular members to whom I am annexed as a seventeenth.[1] I dined with Professor Magnus, great in chemistry and opulent. I rather think he is a descendent of Father Abraham but a most agreeable, gentlemanly man with the ways of society and the world and the most devoted love of science. His wife, in middle age, a descendant of the exiled Huguenots, is one of the finest women I ever saw, with eyes as bright as those of your wife. Of the guests was Baron von Magnus, lately Prussian minister in Mexico, which he had left hardly three weeks ago. Of course I had a good time. Among the topics we spoke of the new history of Napoleon I by Lanfrey, which, if you have not seen, I advise you to get and read. It is very well written, and contains a careful analysis of the man; the history of his boyhood and youth and his career to the

[1] This society of savants, of which the full title is "Mittwochs-Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Unterhaltung," was founded in 1863. Through the kindness of Mr. Leonard L. Mackall and Professor Wilhelm Foerster of Berlin, I have before me the full list of members, their percentages of attendance at meetings, the titles and dates of papers read, and other information, printed for the five hundredth meeting of the club, June 26, 1901. Bancroft bears the only Anglo-Saxon name in the list. He attended sixty-five out of eighty-six meetings during his residence at Berlin. He entertained the club six times at his house, and four times was the speaker of the evening, on historical and political topics. The lists are a model of German accuracy and completeness.

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"Thursday evening I went to Lepsius's who is himself learned and a man of the world, with a charming wife and daughters. His house was full of the best German society, among others Hofmann[2] the chemist and his charming young wife. Of the diplomats I was alone, and while I see all the society of Berlin, my colleagues stick to their own circle. I wound up the evening at Baron Nothomb's, the Belgian's, who is one of the ablest of them all.

"Friday night the 10th we had a gathering of the Americans domiciled for the winter in Berlin. We have here more American students at the University than from Italy, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, France, Great Britain and Ireland, Spain and Portugal put together, which of course places Americans in high esteem among the professors. We count about fifty students this winter. You must help me bring the number up to two hundred. We have, here, not the young only, but professors from Ann Arbor and elsewhere, 'ministers of the gospel,' full grown.

"Saturday evening Mrs. B. and I were at a reception

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at the house of the Librarian Dr. Pertz.[1] His wife is the sister of Sir Charles Lyell: and he and I date our friendship from the days[2] when we made the journey on foot from Rome to Tusculum and Monte Albano. At those places you are pretty sure to meet Trendelenburg. Dr. Pertz speaks well of King Theodore; and indeed the Germans do not view with favour the attempt to crush out the only African Christian kingdom, and to hand Abyssinia over to Moslem ambition.

"Sunday the twelfth I resolved I would see Bekker, the Editor of Plato and Aristotle. He, now 83 years old, was out on a walk; but I had not talked long with his wife before he returned. He and his Sophia were *Sonntagskinder*, both born on Sunday. I rather think she did the courting for Bekker before, who then and now was and is gifted with the gift of silence. Of the Grimms he said, Jacob the elder spoke to his brother William one day of their fast growing old, and that one of them should marry. 'Well who should it be'? Jacob said, 'You, for you are the youngest'; 'Ah!' said the brother complainingly, 'you always put the hard work off on me.' Nevertheless he married; and our Herman Grimm is the consequence. And Bekker and his wife talked on about Schleiermacher, no I am wrong, the wife talked and he listened.

"Monday I went alone to the opera to hear *Margaret*, or, as we call it, *Faust*. It was well given, but not the best way, for Lucca is in Petersburg. And speaking of

[1] Georg Heinrich Pertz, 1795–1876, historian and head of the Royal Library at Berlin.

[2] During Bancroft's first visit to Europe, 1818–1822.

Petersburg reminds me that the Imperial Academy lately made me one of its members.

"Tuesday evening Mrs. B. and I were both at Trendelenburg's. He lives in the simplest manner, but his hospitality has dignity, as well as the charms of receiving the most cultivated men. His style of receiving is such as is in vogue in Berlin. Between 8 and 9 tea is served; conversation is kept up in the moving circle till ten; then *all*, even if so many as sixty, sit down to supper where they are served by only one or two waiters, and of those all but one females. The supper is always moderate but very good and how two or three contrive to serve so many and quietly without confusion and effectively too is a wonder to American housekeepers. Trendelenburg adheres stoutly to Kant; and indeed all agree wonderfully well and are becoming very intimate. At their suppers, there are the young and gay as well as the grave, and tongues run as briskly as I ever knew. The company sits in groups at different tables, and each party seems to dispute the palm of content and gaiety.

"Wednesday I dined at a diplomatic dinner; Tenorio, the Spanish minister was the Amphitryon, and the British Ambassador and the Prussian Minister of Finance with twenty or thirty more were the guests. Everything was splendid and profuse, wines and viands, but not so much of society as in one of the German parties.

"Then last night I took tea and supped at the Ober-Consistorialrath Twesten's. The rooms were full with the ablest professors, the most celebrated politicians of the liberal school, and young men and handsome women. Everything sparkled with cheerfulness and

intelligence; the party did not break up till midnight. It was a wonder to me how naturally and without fuss about seventy people found their places at several supper tables, spread in two large rooms and were served with excellent dishes by few servants, thoroughly well and without parade. The custom is to have on the light claret and light Rhenish. Two dishes one of fish, one of roast are carried round: and after this preserves and cake, or very exceptionally ice cream. During the evening, I became posted up in German politics and dipped a little into Austrian. . . ."

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"*January*, 1868.

". . . *Wednesday the* 22. My evening for the Wednesday society. I took first one half of Mozart's *Magic Flute* and did it not snow as I came out of the opera and went punctually at 8 to my club! It was at the house of Dove, that we met; he was not the speaker of the evening; but was to occupy a little time in illustrating the telegraph. His house is full of curious models; photographs, inventions illustrating the phenomena of sound and light; when he paused, the regular speaker found it too late; as Dove took the whole evening. He brought out once more the machine of which the keys utter the vowel sounds—he explained how, if you could but know the change in rarefaction you could measure the height of mountains by the diminished speed of sound. Of the influence of temperature on sound; so that a good singer would need no thermometer, but if his perceptions were only nice enough,

could tell you as he uttered a note, just the temperature of the room, how in an orchestra the notes of the stringed instruments become lower as the room grows warmer while those of metal grow higher; and hence the constant turning of the screws to bring the strings into tune. Supper at ten. How the wind blew! how fast the soft snow fell. I had ordered a droschky, a miserable one horse vehicle. Seeing Dorner, the great theologian, unprovided for, I took him along; and Lepsius is my near neighbour: my heart was large enough for him too and my servant was with the driver. On we went through the snow four or five inches deep—our horse gave out—so we kept on talking in the street till the new droschky came up. Dorner complained of Bismarck's letting the king say in his speech, that Prussia would support 'the dignity and independence of the Pope.' The like he said had never before been heard from a Prussian king; and he complained of it very much—declared Bismarck incapable of estimating the religious element in the people—this was his failure. So said Dorner. Perhaps I will one day give you a sketch of B. of my own drawing. *Friday*, 24. Audience with Prince and Princess Friedrich Karl's, he a wicked secessionist in our war, she perhaps one of the loveliest among the female principalities. It is usual for these audiences to be short. I liked her so much, I thought I would see how long I could prolong it, and we kept talking a half hour. He paired your friend Gen. McClellan. At six I dined with the incomparable Hofmann. Twenty of us at table all men but one. I sat on the left of his wife. 'How old do you think me?' said she.

'Two and twenty.' 'Guess again.' 'Three and twenty.' 'You were right first.' She is a lovely child of northern Germany. We never got from the house till 10. Saturday I heard *Hamlet.* Not equal to Booth's.

"At dinner on the 27th, the minister of finance, Baron von der Heydt, had about fifty guests. The hall in which they sat at table was very large, and at least five and twenty feet high, a magnificent banqueting room. Up to this time I had never seen Moltke; and seized the opportunity of speaking with him. He said the third of July[1] was to have been a day of rest to the troops, they were so worn with fatigue; but in the night they were summoned to battle, went into it without breakfast, fought nineteen hours, part of the time against a greatly superior force, continuously without food, refreshment or rest. He is a very quiet, unassuming man, to be sure much older than Grant, with less fire, and if possible more unassuming silence. And as modest in his demeanour as if he were an unknown man. There were at the banquet the two ambassadors nearly all the ministers plenipo. and the high officers of state but not the ministers. We were seated so that a Prussian was wedged in between every two diplomats.

"In the evening there was a great ball at the British Ambassador's;[2] king and queen were present and crown

[1] July 3, 1866, the date of the Prussian victory over the Austrian army at Sadowa.

[2] Lord Augustus Loftus, subsequently Ambassador to Russia and Governor of New South Wales.

prince and prince Karl and prince Albert and princess Friedrich Karl who has more beauty, grace and intelligence than any of them; and others, and all their Hof-Marshalls and ladies. The king spoke a good deal with me; and as Mrs. Bliss was on my arm there was a good chance for her to speak with the Majesty of Prussia. Princess Friedrich Karl made a few words of apology to me for having postponed as long as she did my audience; and had taken to heart the advice I had given her to read Lanfrey's History of Napoleon I. She had ordered a copy of it. I had wished to be the first person presented at court as accredited to the Nord-Deutsche Bund. I complained to the King and to Count Bismarck that the Italian and Austrian ministers were before me. You remember, in the words of Wallenstein, said Bismarck, the long journey excuses your tardiness. Afterwards as I met him standing by ourselves (now you must never let any of this tattle be read by any one who would report it, so that it would come back or reach some contributor to the Press; but you are discretion itself) he said, 'Was there ever a race like these Hohenzollerns for eating! I dined today with Prince Karl and he ate a very hearty dinner. And now he goes to supper and is helped to two large slices of ham, finishes them and asks for more, till he has eaten about half of the whole. Then a servant whom he knew comes up and says, "here is an excellent salad which my wife whose cooking you like made up," and thereupon the prince fell upon the salad.' Bismarck spoke seriously of Napoleon III as one of a hundred, nay as one of two or three, who best understood things in France. And

it was quite plain, he was just now in a state of contentment about the emperor's present policy—which I had all along said was a policy of peace towards Prussia. Bismarck said that Napoleon III had a very hard task upon his hands and when I quoted a remark that Gallatin had made that the French are a very easy people to govern, he demurred. I reminded him how little I had taken up of his official hours. 'Come as often as you will,' said he, 'my time is always at your disposition.' And then he asked me how I was getting on with my treaty,[1] saying again that he had got the king's assent to it; but that now it was sent to the two departments of War and of the Interior so that it lingers long. . . .

"Monday was the day for opening the fair which is held here for the relief of East Prussia now suffering from famine. I sent my wife who made large purchases. Tuesday I went. The best people for character and rank were standing at the stalls as saleswomen. One table the Queen had herself taken part in fitting up; and graced it with vases which she painted, as the story went, with her own hands. The day was rather a plebeian one; the King and Queen came in, and a crowd of staring men and grinning women was whirling round them wherever they moved; the King very good-natured and affable; the Queen abounding in words and smiles. For know, dear F——, that the business, profession, or post of a princess or a queen is one to be

[1] The important naturalisation treaty between the United States and the North German Confederation, negotiated by Bancroft, was signed February 22, 1868.

filled according to the highest pattern of excellence and with the skill that suits the position. The Prussian Queen is a model queen; she goes to church on Sunday; after church she patronises charity concerts for the benefit of sufferers. She visits hospitals; she assists Magdalen asylums; she walks daily, not apart like the queen of England, but in the muddy sidewalks of the muddy street right under my windows in a place as thronged as the upper part of Fifth Avenue on the way to the park.

"*January* 31. Yesterday the 30th as I came home from my morning walk at half past three whom should I meet on the narrow trottoir but the Queen, trudging along through the dirty slush, as though royalty had no better road to a good appetite than the rest of us mortals can have. I hurried through my early dinner and at five was at the Academy of Sciences to attend its anniversary celebration. Who should come in but the Queen attended by the King? Bois-Reymond delivered the address, his subject partly a eulogy of Frederic the Great, partly and more especially the character of Voltaire as a natural philosopher. The discourse was well written and well delivered, the speaker sitting and reading. After the orator ceased, Hofmann the great chemist lectured for an hour on the topic just now most interesting the men of his department. Of old, men thought different composite bodies owed their differences to being constituted of different ingredients; now it is found that bodies of exactly the same ingredients differ as widely as possible by means of a different collocation of the component parts. And he illustrated his theme by the clearest statements, by visible representations of

different clustering of the elements, and by perfectly successful experiments. The Queen listened like one entranced; and when after two hours the sitting closed, she had a word and a smile for the orator and for Hofmann and for the philosophers who were nearest her; and the King said pleasant things to every one whom he could approach. Now mark, I met the Queen in the mud of Thiergarten Strasse at 3½; at the academy from 5 till 7 and after; at 9 there was a ball in the palace; and the royalties first came into the diplomatic hall; and the Queen as if she had a more than Webster's dictionary in her head went round the room and without weariness or rest, spoke at large with every one, mixing up gestures with words and smiles, and after finishing in this way in one room, went to the next, and the next, and on to the ballroom and was ceaseless in her care for her guests till 1¾ this morning. . . . Could you do all that? The ball I must say was very pleasant; the rooms are well arranged for the free circulation of the guests; some good pictures, above all two master works of Achenbach adorned one apartment; the Queen's boudoir was open; there were not only courtiers among the invited, but Ranke, Dove, Lepsius, Hofmann, Beseler and the rector of the University; Waagen the historian of paintings; and one or two more men of letters. The ladies were beautifully dressed and many of them were themselves beautiful. In the course of the evening I found three or four men like myself in plain black; but in the beginning I stood like a raven among men so gorgeously clad, that, as Shakespeare has it, every one of them was a mine of gold. Do not think I wasted my evening; I

pushed my treaty forward a good bit, and ventured even to speak about it to the King. Carl Schurz has been here. Instead of teasing him, Bismarck received his call, and invited him to dine. 'At dinner,' so he related to me what happened, 'an old conservative stiff in his notions asked me who that red whiskered man was, and on purpose to plague him a little, I answered that it was the man who about ten years ago got Kinkel out of prison and fled from the country. The conservative looked aghast and I enjoyed his surprise.' So far he spoke jestingly. And then taking a graver tone he said, 'I chose to know him only as one on whom the American government had conferred an important office, and as a private gentleman. . . .'"

To President Johnson.

"Berlin, 21 *January*, 1868.

"I was much obliged to you for the good wishes you sent me through Mr. Seward, that I might find my winter's residence agreeable. It bids fair to prove so in the way that will of all others be most satisfactory to me: I hope really to be of use in my position. Last Saturday evening Count Bismarck informed me, that the convention between us, protecting our naturalised citizens from military service in Prussia, can now be made, as the king had given his consent verbally. Let us not be too confident, till the whole thing is settled: if the settlement should be one that is unanimously acceptable in America I am sure you will give me your approbation; and I am sure that the issue will be held

to be very creditable to your administration, the more so, as it has been in debate for a long number of years and as it was treated in your annual message.

"The public consideration of the United States stands very high in Europe and is increasing. The old croakers so often foretold our downfall and we so constantly disappointed them, that they now think the life of the republic is insured; and great as are our present disturbances and troubles, everybody seems to expect that we shall rise above them all. The indirect influence of our vitality is exceedingly great.

"This people is as thoroughly monarchical as our country is republican. A boy at a Potsdam school was asked, to what class of animals man belongs; and he very correctly answered: 'To the Mammalia.' He was next asked to name the largest of that class and after a little reflection, he answered bravely: '*The King.*' The inhabitants of Prussia are very generally of this way of thinking; and yet are thoroughly friendly to us. And they well may be. But for the triumph of Union in America, it could not have succeeded in North Germany.

"My letter of Nov. 1, '67 on the North German Union has produced in Europe a very great sensation, such as I had not dreamed of. It has been printed in all the leading papers of Germany and in France it has been widely circulated and commented on. Several of my old friends are very desirous of my passing some time at Paris. That may be done by and bye, but at present my hands are full here, and will be till our treaty is made. . . ."

To Rev. Dr. Samuel Osgood.

"Berlin, 21 *February*, 1868.

"Would you were here to take part with us tomorrow night in our commemoration of the birthday of Washington! We shall have a fine assembly of Americans, with a sprinkling of Germans: and what is best, my wife is in very good condition and able to receive her friends. The climate has suited her exactly, as it has me. We have few cold days and not one severely cold. Eleven or twelve degrees of Fahrenheit is the lowest my thermometer has testified to. We see little of the sun; and in midwinter the days are wonderfully short; but as an advantage to countervail the plague of darkness, the temperature of day and night is very even. The thermometer all the winter has day and night hovered about the freezing point: and now our walks in the park are dry; the little birds begin to sing and the air already has a prophecy of spring. Delicious the climate is certainly not; but very salubrious; none more so; and now that the days increase, they do it with a rush, that we, in our more southern latitude know nothing of.

"In theology the most marked phenomenon in Europe is the concentrated unity and activity of the Roman clerical party. No band of conspirators was ever more closely welded together. The one will of the Pope rules the creed, the politics, the conduct of all. The selfsame malign influence is at work in Spain, in France, in Rome, in Italy, in Southern Germany, and in Austria. Nay it extends to England and North Germany and the United States. There are very many

good catholics in Germany who believe that religion suffers from the possession of temporal power by the Pope; but the utterance of such an opinion is no longer tolerated: the very thought is condemned as a heresy. So we must not treat this aspect of catholicism with the forbearance of sentimentality and imagination; the attempt at tyranny over mind and in the state is too terrible to be favoured or forgiven. We must rekindle the lights of Puritanism; and I find myself ready to make war on superstition and servitude of mind in all its forms; even of symbolism. . . ."

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"Berlin, *September* 8, 1868.

"You have been constantly in my mind; but in the latter part of winter I had so much to write, that I waited for leisure, which never came; and this summer while almost every day was filled with interest I had no rest to keep a record of my pleasant experiences. I mean some day to draw for you a sketch of Bismarck, but I will wait a little longer to study his character more closely; and then confide to you my inmost thoughts about him.

"I fear his health is shaken beyond the hope of a complete restoration. He has long been a sufferer from neuralgia in one of his lower limbs; an ignorant physician at St. Petersburg put a plaster on the inner side of his leg under the knee. (This he told me himself.) After it had been endured for two hours the pain became intolerable and waking from a sort of doze, he hastily

tore the application from the flesh, into which it had eaten so deeply that even a vein was ruptured and destroyed. The blood which ought to have found a passage in its natural channel, had now to seek a new course and an incurable weakness was the consequence. Bismarck is a man of robust frame, made for hardy health; there is nothing weak about him, in his natural organisation; and his normal state is that of energy in mind and body; and here is this little injury clinging to him for the rest of his life-time, and disturbing him so much, that he suffers pain whenever he tasks himself too much; and pain brings on sleeplessness and agitation of nerves, and the three together unfit him for the daily warfare of public life, make him irritable and inapt to sustain contradiction.

"Last Spring he was on horseback at a review here in Berlin, the fatigue was just too much for him, as the day was warm and dusty. The President of the Imperial Diet went up to him, (I had this from the President himself, whom I got to repeat it that I might not err) and asked after his health. 'Wretched' says Bismarck. 'Why, what's the matter?' said Simson. Bismarck answered, and there were two dozen persons around him, who might have heard, 'I cannot sleep, I cannot eat, I cannot drink; I cannot laugh, I cannot smoke, I cannot work.' Simson advised him to use the vapour bath. 'The cold I suffer from,' said Bismarck, 'does not come from a cause that baths could remove.' 'What is the cause?' said Simson. 'Ah,' said Bismarck, '*Ich habe Nerven Bankerot*' which in English is, 'my disease is Bankruptcy of the nerves.' From the review

he went to council, sat in a draft to escape the heat, went home and was seized with a pleuritic attack, which menaced his life. As soon as he was well enough, about three months ago, he went to his estate in Pomerania. But though he improved in health he still could not sleep as you and I can. To make things worse, his horse, as he rode with friends in the forest, stepped his forefoot into a mud hole, stumbled forward, threw Bismarck and keeled over upon him. By miracle Bismarck was not crushed to death, had not a limb broken; but he was thoroughly bruised and by the account I received last week his right arm is black with extravasated blood, and his fingers so numb that he can not even write his name. . . ."

To William H. Seward.

"Munich, *September* 19, 1868.

"The influence of the United States in Europe is very great and constantly on the increase. In proof of it I state for the information of yourself and the President what came to my knowledge yesterday.

"An extract of a letter just received from Paris was read to me by a person of the highest character, who assured me that the letter proceeded from a person deserving all confidence. It alluded to the uncertainties in the councils of the Emperor of France and those about him, and it went on to say that they were the less inclined to war and more fearful of its consequences from the recollection of the manner in which they had treated the United States during their civil war; that it

troubled them to remember that they had gone so far as to invite Russia to join with them in recognising the independence of the Southern Confederacy; that these recollections were accompanied with the clear perception of the friendly relations of the United States with Russia and Prussia who had been averse to any such recognition; and that the anxiety as to what the United States might do in the event of a conflict between France [*sic*] has its weight in determining France to keep the peace.

"I should not have thought this account worth communicating to you if it had come to me through any ordinary channel. It does your administration great honour and there will be no harm in leaving the anxious to their anxiety a while longer."

Writing to Mrs. Davis from Berlin on September 17, 1868, Bancroft said: "Now I am going to Hungary; public business takes me to-day to Munich; where I expect to eat a late breakfast tomorrow, and instead of turning due North again, I will come back by way of Vienna and Pesth, Prague and Dresden." After his return there were letters to the Count and Countess von Andrassy[1] and to the Chevalier de Mallmann acknowledging hospitalities in Buda-Pesth and Vienna. Two letters to Mrs. Davis, however, preserve most clearly the impressions of Bancroft's picturesque experience at the Hungarian capital.

[1] Count Julius Andrassy (1823–1890), in 1868 Minister-President of Austria-Hungary.

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"Buda-Pesth, *October* 4, 1868.

"How often in your life have you passed a whole day filled up for the most part with unusual occurrences of the pleasantest nature, and without one single disagreeable sensation? Such days of perfect, unmixed enjoyment have been rare in my life; I hope they have been frequent in yours; but such an one I have just passed through.

"The fourth of October is the Catholic festival of St. Francis, and Catholics celebrate their years not on the day of their birth, but of the saint whose name they bear; and Francis is the name of the constitutional king of Hungary; and of the greatest of magyar patriots, the immortal Deák (pronounce Dà, áak, accent on last syllable). The emperor has made his peace with Hungary, where the government is conducted by a united ministry enjoying the confidence of the king and in perfect harmony with church, nobility and people. I asked once, and of the person most likely to know, if emperor Francis, in Hungary known only as king, ever recalled to memory the death warrant which he had signed, of scores of the ablest and best men of the country; but no one has heard him utter a word of remorse or regret. On the other hand he is constant in avowing, that having taken an oath to maintain the constitution, he shall scrupulously keep his word; and his conduct conforms to this declaration, which he makes freely and as often as the question arises; and all agree that he is sincere, and that if he were not, he is

by the state of the country compelled to fidelity, for otherwise his dynasty must come to an end. Further, they tell me, that he refers with satisfaction to his separation from Germany and Italy and his escape from the never ending vexations in which his politics were heretofore involved. But the empress is the great favourite of the Magyars. She has the sense to perceive that the descent of the crown to her son depends on the success of the new measures for the reconstruction of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy on the principles of liberty; and she is believed to have exercised the best influence on the opinions and policy of her husband. When in Hungary they live in the simplest manner at Gödöllö a former country seat of the Esterhazy family, free from state etiquette like a private family, without military guards, without one of the *Gens d'armes*, for police, discarding all the nonsense of Spanish formalities, easily accessible; and winning confidence from the people by reposing confidence in their loyalty. The Emperor, I mean the King (of Hungary) said the other day to Eötvös,[1] one of his ministers 'Come out and see me as often as you can; and on any day you like remain and dine with me; there will always be a plate for you at table'; a manner and familiarity unknown in the former history of Austrian monarchs.

"Francis Deák is the great man of Hungary. He is of a good family and was well educated in the study of the law. He has a very, very scant income from his estate, barely enough for the simplest bachelor's life;

[1] Baron Joseph von Eötvös (1813–1871), in 1868 "Kultusminister" of Austria-Hungary.

and refuses office, pensions, gifts, valuable marks of favour. The emperor-king to get round him sent him his portrait in miniature with brilliants, and the Royal autograph; but Deák could not be caught so; the present was refused. Deák should by the voice of all be Minister-President, but he refuses. As a consequence he is the oracle of king, ministry and parliament, for his temper is angelically sweet and his judgment calm and sure, resting on the realities of the question undisturbed by excited feeling. He is now an old man only three years and fourteen days younger than I; short of stature, thick-set, overflowing with kindness. A man without pretensions, of wonderful sagacity, and more wonderful tranquil imperturbable consistency, he has pursued undeviatingly an end, never in the darkest hour demanding less for Hungary and never in the defeat of Austria exacting more. He loves the Germans, German culture, and the German connection; and the rights of Hungary being safe, he desires the dualistic union of Hungary and Austria. He has gone through every vicissitude, and now in his old age sees his country in possession of all that he claimed for it, and entering on a new career of freedom and power and industry.

"No sooner had I finished my early breakfast than I left my hotel to go to Deák. The morning was one of the most delicious of autumn; an air pure and bracing; the sky bright. The Danube seemed to enjoy rolling its majestic waters between the high precipitous hills of Buda and the quays of thriving, busy, rapidly increasing Pesth. Deák gave me a most cordial welcome, ac-

cepted my congratulations and explained to me his plan for separating church and state in the kingdom. Presently one personal friend after another came in to wish him joy; shaking hands or in case of nearest intimacy embracing. At nine his doors flew open, and the liberal party of the Hungarian parliament marched in, all in the Hungarian costume, some with the sabre. The president of *'the Table of Magnates'* (so their house of Lords is called) acted as spokesman for the whole, and made the great patriot an animated speech in Magyar, which the wise told me was charming. Upon this Deák moved towards them, and in the manner of a father and elder brother replied in a manner so lovely it seemed that his lips were dropping honey. His advice, as it was interpreted to me, enforced moderation and was listened to with affection and the most perfect deference. When this formality was over, and we all began a promiscuous conversation, who should walk in but Count Andrassy, the famous Minister-President, who accepted the office of forming a ministry which Deák had declined, and who has the most perfect sympathy with Deák and his politics. He stepped up and embraced his master. By and bye he found time to appoint me a tête a tête at noon. Others continued to come in, even members of the intractable opposition. There seemed to be universal love and reverence for the man who more than any other, has made Hungary what it is.

"By degrees the company retired. Just after ten a most solemn service was to be performed in the church in which Francis the King had been crowned. I ar-

rived rather late; the choir and nave nearest the choir was filled with the ministers, high officers, members of parliament and the like. I forced my way through the common crowd; and being observed by some one, was led to a very good seat in the part of the nave nearest the choir. At the altar was the Primate of Hungary, two or three bishops, and everything was prepared for a great solemnity. The Catholic service is of course familiar to you; the music resounded through the church, and the procession was singularly magnificent.

Having a half hour before noon, I drove to the Mahometan Mosk where from the times of the Turkish rule in Buda a great leader of that sort of the faithful lay buried. The building was very ordinary, more like a tomb than a place of worship; but the view from the height on which it stands one on which you could feast your eyes. The river with its deep and copious stream, its beautiful chain bridge, was below me; Buda and its churches and palaces on the south; and the other side of the river, Pesth with its ambitious tendencies stretching from the water in every direction, great already, more beautiful than any European capital north of the Alps and promising ere long to overtake and exceed Vienna.

"At twelve with Andrassy for ¾ of an hour. He is tall, forty-five years old, dark complexioned, even swarthy, like a Southern Spaniard or Italian, bright snapping black eyes, ready speech, and very affable that is, easy to be spoken to. We spoke in German; but every Magyar learns at least three languages besides his own, and sometimes adds Italian to his indispens-

able English, French and German. We ran rapidly over the whole compass of German politics; he declared himself not in the least opposed to the self annexation of South Germany to North Germany; were the union to take place, there would be no war, no resistance on the side of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The emperor-king would not wish to oppose; and if he did, Hungary would not suffer him to do so; only he did not wish to see an alliance between Russia and Germany (an alliance which does not and cannot exist) for that would endanger the existence of Hungary; but he avowed his confidence in himself and the resources of his country and believed himself able to defend his country against every danger. You know some millions of the population of the Hungarian Monarchy is Slavonic; and of them many are of the Greek church, and so liable to a dangerous sympathy for Russia. Moreover a large number is Romanic, and of the Greek church, and so attracted towards Moldavia and Wallachia. He spoke a great deal about Bismarck; and described very well his clear vigorous vehement will, but swift discernment of the means to execute his will, and his moderation in success. He allowed me to ask him many questions about the Emperor for whose loyal attachment to the constitution he vouched. With regard to the temporal power of the Pope, he cared no more for it than we do; and thinks the September convention unwise, that the Italians should have starved him out. For himself he was in favour, most earnestly in favour of the continued connexion of Hungary and Austria, comparing the Dualism to an ellipse with two

centres of motion. He was proud and happy that the Hungarian part of the empire had succeeded in its organisation and made its settlement with the Croatians; the other part Cis-Leithania had partially failed, or rather not so easily succeeded because the leaders in Lower Austria had not had faith in the cause which they were to direct; and the difficulties which they were encountering were but their natural punishment for their skepticism.

"As I parted he invited me to return at five to dine. He seemed wholly free from any rancour towards Prussia, wished her well; but would not consent to the idea, that the Austro-Germans should join the German Confederacy. On the contrary, the Magyars whose civilisation was German must join with the Austro-Germans to save the Empire from being ruled by the Slavonic majority, and through the sympathies of that majority brought under the domineering influence of Russia. He reasoned well, that a Germany which should include the Austrian provinces could be formed only by republicans. . . ."

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"Berlin, *December* 4, 1868.

"My account from Pesth I hope reached you in due season. After leaving Andrassy whose residence is on the height of Buda I descended the high hill which everywhere opens so magnificent views, and went back over the Danube to busy, happy, thriving Pesth. Its position is far better for commerce than that of Vienna.

It lies directly upon the mighty river and looks like an American town. Its population increases with so great rapidity (20,000 in one year in a population of 136,000 in 1868); the streets are crowded with obstruction; all building materials used as fast as they arrive; more labour wanted than offers; shipyards where large boats are building for steaming up and down the Danube, depots of railroads that are to penetrate all parts of the land, and connect the city with Hamburg and Stettin, with the Black Sea, ere long even with Constantinople, and at once with Fiume. Look at the map: Pesth is the very centre of the Austrian empire; the best seat for commerce and in beauty of position most attractive. I drove among its busy streets, for Sunday makes no difference in the concourse of people: I tried to find Pulsky who, you may have heard was with Kossuth in America. I met in the streets a solemn procession in honour of a deceased member of the assembly, with music and banners, and priests and burning candles and torches kindled and borne in procession by daylight, and a crowd of lookers on. Then to the public gardens where people swarm on Sundays; all inchoate as with us and all full of vigorous promise. And every Hungarian anxious for peace, full of hope for his country, eager only for the consolidation and development of its institutions and for a career of undisturbed industry.

"At five I was again at Andrassy's. His company was the corps of Hungarian Ministers of state—among them Eötvös, famed for his gentle character and liberal views. No ladies except the wife of Andrassy. In one of the rooms, beautifully inlaid with wood, there was a

raised plank, rough and just broad enough for a man to stand upon. Andrassy when overtasked and suffering in the head calls some young friend to fence with him; and that serves for exercise and for relaxation. He has been suffering from excess of labour; but now he seems in the best health.

"I led Countess to dinner and sat on her right. She is of Magyar descent; of Siebenbürgen: a protestant; and of the Calvinist school, which here means the best and sincerest sort of protestant. She is very intelligent, I believe writes verses, and translates Eötvös' poems into French; speaks as all cultivated Magyar women, several languages, is greatly and justly admired. She had a great deal to say of the Queen of Hungary and said to come to Hungary and not see her was like going to Rome and not seeing the Pope. The company was all in good spirits, for the ministry is a united ministry, in harmony with King and Hungarian houses of parliament and people. So we remained together much longer than is usual at dinner-parties; and then as it was proper for the Ministers to appear in public on the evening of their King's name-day, we all went to a public place—the Magyar theatre. The hero of the play, as I could gather from the acting, was a Magyar nobleman, who had fallen in love and married in Paris, who gave up one after another the peculiarities of the Magyar costume, till at last when asked to shave off his mustachio, plucked up a spirit, took his French wife under his arm, and set off for his Magyar home. The colours of the theatre were blue and white in token of love for the Queen who [was] a Bavarian princess.

"The next day I passed some hours in the gallery of Prince Esterhazy, now here. There are beautiful pictures, two especially of Murillo: the infant Jesus feeding the missionaries with loaves of fine white bread, and a holy family, on one side Joseph at work at his carpenter's bench, on the other, the madonna in a chair with a cushion in her lap, on which she has her sewing work, while in the centre two darling infants Jesus and John were engaged in tying a riband round a miniature cross. The gallery is very rich in most excellent pictures. I called at the proper hour on Count Andrassy, on the wife of the Minister of Finance: dined in company with Pulsky: and after dinner drove with his son once more to the Mosk on the other the Buda side of the Danube. The hour and the air were delicious: the views from the vineyards round the Mosk exquisitely beautiful. Inside were two dervishes, seated on the stone floor for the night to meditate and pray, pilgrims from afar. They gave us their blessing as I left them. As I came back from the Mosk, the owner of the vineyard insisted on regaling me with a glass of his brisk wine, beside grapes and bread. Home to the inn; to bed; and then towards the North. . . ."

In a letter of November 29, 1868, to Secretary Seward Bancroft said: "There is now a lull in the rumours of war, and they will not very soon be revived; but as the pacific intentions on the part of France are qualified by the intimations of a policy hostile to any further improvement of the unity of the German People, it can only be said that the danger of war is indefinitely ad-

journed." During the short period of waiting for it, Bancroft, as the following passages will show, was taking advantage of his opportunities to observe the two great figures on the German side of the impending conflict.

To C. E. Detmold.

"Berlin, 29 *December*, 1868.

"I have just come in from my ride; the sun bright, the earth free from frost, the temperature at 45 or more of Fahrenheit, and so it has been for the last fortnight. This too in the latitude of the Southern part of Labrador, with the night 16h. 25′ long and the sun during the short day stealing along the southern edge of the horizon. My companion is often General Moltke, who is very nearly the same age as myself.[1] Three weeks ago I was riding with him, we passed a Count who looked older than either of us. 'He looks,' said Moltke, 'much older than he is; he has used his body more than his mind.' We fell upon the question whether men as they come near their end would like to begin the battle of life anew. 'Who,' said the General, 'would live his life over again? I would not mine. The old story of the Hindoo philosopher is true, when he said this life is a punishment for transgressions committed under an earlier form of being.' All this he spoke deliberately and emphatically, and this man is one of the two most honoured men in Germany. As we passed along, every one took off his hat and bowed to him; as we passed a restaurant a crowd filled the window to greet him as he rode by. It seemed as if every eye that saw him gave

[1] Moltke and Bancroft both were born in 1800 and died in 1891.

him a blessing, and every voice was raised to bear witness to him; and yet life had for him no attractions; and the thought of renewing it on earth was one from which he shrunk with horror. . . ."

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"*January* 2, 1869.

". . . Today in my ride I came in sight of General Moltke with whom I have formed habits of friendship. The day before Christmas his wife 'after twenty-seven years of happiest married life,' as he himself said, died after a short and terribly painful illness. To have forced myself on him might have been an intrusion, to turn away from him my heart forbade. So I rode up to him, turned my horse and accompanied. He is called the silent; with me he talks much and with openness. A moment or two we walked our horses in silence: I only have expressed my grief in the fewest but very sincere words. Presently he observed: 'The attack was severe; the best physicians, the most careful treatment were of no avail; it was not possible to save her life.' We went on and again he spoke: 'I have taken her to Creisau (his place in Silesia) and have placed her in the church (which was on his estate) buried under the palms and wreaths of flowers that were heaped upon her. I have selected a spot on high ground, commanding a beautiful view; and then in the spring I shall build a vault to receive her' (and the thought not uttered was, to receive himself too when he should come to die); 'she was so much younger than I,' said he, 'she should

have outlived me; but when that was spoken of, she used to say, that she had no desire to survive me long. I said repeating his words: 'Twenty-seven years of happiest married life are a great blessing.' 'Thank God for all that,' he answered and then spoke of her illness. She had charged him if danger of life came, he should tell her of it, that they might once more partake of the *Abendmahl* (the Lord's supper) together. 'After all,' said he, 'perhaps she died opportunely to escape terrible trials. Happy in the moment of her death, in so far as she left her country in repose and happiness. Who knows what disaster may arise? Who knows what mad scheme Beust may conjure up? Thank God you Americans at least are truly our friends.' Moltke holds the post which throws upon him all the anxiety and responsibility of keeping the Prussian Army ready to take the field at an instant, if Napoleon should suddenly engage in carrying out his ambitious plans of aggrandisement for France.

"Moltke held out his hand, and pressed mine cordially, as he left the park for home. I prolonged my ride and presently Count Bismarck trotted past me; just as he had gone by me he recognised me and turned to speak with me. He was looking for his daughter and presently she came in sight, well mounted, attended by another young lady and by her brother and a large group of gay companions. We turned to go home, as it was now late; just then the King in a light open carriage drove past, and as he greeted us most smilingly, looked amazed to see a crowd of riders together. Bismarck began and talked on the branches of the great

German family, and proved us all to be Saxons. Then he explained to us the new horse path and new carriage way, that are to be made for the accommodation of the greatly increasing population of Berlin etc. etc. . . ."

The entrance of General Grant upon his presidential duties is marked by two significant letters from Bancroft.

To ELIHU B. WASHBURNE.[1]

"BERLIN, *March* 5, 1869.

"I pray you to present my congratulations to President Grant upon his entrance on the duties of his new office. He cannot place too high an estimate on the ever increasing esteem and respect in which the U. S. are held by the several powers and peoples of Europe. When twenty-three years ago I went as Minister to England I found the conservatives of Europe still indulging in the idea that a republican government could not be maintained over so extensive a territory as ours for want of a sufficient central energy. The manner in which the war with Mexico was conducted at so great a distance from our own soil had a very sensible influence on public opinion in this hemisphere. The attempt eight years ago to dissolve the union encouraged once more those who regarded republicanism with scepticism. The suppression of the rebellion went beyond what most of the governments of Europe regarded as possible, and as a result the confidence in the immense energy and

[1] Secretary of State, March 5–11, 1869; then Minister to France.

durability of our institutions was firmly established, and by the abolition of slavery our republic became more and more endeared to the best men of Europe. Since I have been on this continent, I have watched the continual steady rise of this implicit trust in our ultimate success, and while in old times anything that appeared to go amiss in America was looked upon as ominous of evil, it has now become the rule to take a bright view of seemingly unfortunate occurrences in our career and to meet every unfavourable appearance with confidence in the ability of our people to surmount every difficulty. When the House of Representatives impeached the late President and he pleaded before the constitutional tribunal, 'see,' said every one, 'what a wonderful country is America where the chief executive can be arraigned without the slightest disturbance of the public peace, the like of which could happen nowhere in Europe.' When the impeachment failed of obtaining the constitutional majority, 'see,' said they all, 'what power American statesmen possess over political passion when a tribunal composed chiefly of eager political adversaries of the President has such power of moderation and self restraint as to refuse his conviction.' The menace of the payment of the 5/20's in paper did not subvert confidence in the credit of the U. S., but only arrested its increase, and the nomination and election of the present president was accompanied by a corresponding increase in the price of American stocks, which have risen under the new influence from 77 to 87 or more with an upward tendency in Germany sufficient to absorb all the 5/20's in the market and to carry them

very much higher if a corresponding increase of confidence should be observable in America.

"The leading liberal newspaper in Berlin ushered in the 4th of March by the remark: 'The day on which General Grant enters upon his office of President of the U. S. of America is regarded by the whole civilised world with sympathetic interest and with the consciousness of its importance.' It was entirely in harmony with the feeling of the King of Prussia and the people of North Germany that Count Bismarck the Chancellor of the North German Confederation sent yesterday by the cable a congratulatory telegram which I trust the President duly received. I invited to my house on that day Count Bismarck, four other Ministers of State, and several of the highest officers in the immediate service of the King. They came not so much to a formal dinner as with hearty good will to take a cordial part in the celebration of an occasion in which they felt the liveliest interest. At the moment when, making due allowance for the difference of longitude, it was thought that the ceremonies of inauguration were over, Count Bismarck rose of himself and as nearly as I can remember spoke what I translate as follows:

"'Permit me, gentlemen, to interrupt your conversation while I say a word on the occasion which has brought us together. This is the day upon which on the other side of the Atlantic the victorious commander in the service of the United States enters on his office as their President. The event, inasmuch as it deeply interests the United States, has a special claim on the sympathetic interest of this realm, for it was a king of Prussia, it was

Frederick II who at the birth of the American Republic was the first among the non-belligerents to welcome its independence.

"'As to the subsequent relations between the two countries, it gives me the greatest pleasure to be able to state as a fact not only from my personal experience as a minister of Prussia but from the archives of its history that the cordial understanding, so happily inaugurated by Washington and Frederick, has never suffered even the slightest jar. Not only has no difficulty ever arisen between the two countries, nothing has ever occurred between them which so much as called for an explanation. It is then to me a most agreeable as well as an appropriate office to ask you to unite with me in drinking in German wine the health of the President of the United States, General Grant.'

"Using the German language I made answer in the same spirit and proposed the health of the King of Prussia. Every one was in the best spirits and animated with the kindliest feelings towards the President, his administration and the country. Through some of my guests an account of the entertainment got abroad, and the manner in which it was received by the public is only another evidence of the fixed determination of this people and its government to live in perfect harmony with the people and government of the U. S."

To President Grant.

"Berlin, *March* 5, 1869.

"Pray find time to accept my congratulations on your attaining the unsought-for honour of the Presidency.

Still more I wish my country joy of the event. You have exactly that power which is required for the success of an administration, comprehensiveness of view joined with success of judgment and force of will to direct. Washington's administration was a glorious one, because he was in truth its chief. Van Buren, in his first three years, left his secretaries to act much on their own responsibility; and in those three years, his course was full of reverses; in his fourth year he made himself in truth the head and centre, and his last year was an admirable one. Buchanan let things drift; and under a bright sky the treasury was all but bankrupt. The success of Polk's administration was due to his own vigilance over all.

"I have not learned, whether the treaty with England on the Oregon or rather Washington Boundary has been accepted by the Senate. We have been unjustly dealt with in former references of boundary questions: that of New Hampshire was followed by a manifestly wrong award; and on the North Eastern Boundary, the King of Holland found the missing Highlands in the centre of the bed of a river. Of those who made or accepted the treaty now still unfulfilled and followed the negotiations in all its forms, I alone or almost alone am left alive. Buchanan, Polk, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Aberdeen, as well as Marcy are dead. Our case has *not yet been stated in all its force.* If it must be referred, I should think this court as safe a one as could be found: of the character of the umpire in Switzerland I know nothing. The terms of the treaty are made to suit the English pretensions. Pardon me for alluding to this

subject; but of those Americans who watched the course of the negotiation most closely, and who were most trusted, I alone remain and feel the warmest interest in the result.

"See what your office is: one of thought and labour; I cannot even wish you joy, without introducing business. I beg my best regards to Mrs. Grant, and am ever my dear General

"Very faithfully yours

"Geo. Bancroft.

"Count Bismarck who had not dined out during the winter with one of the diplomatic corps, gladly accepted my invitation for yesterday out of his desire to prove to you his regard. I assure you we had a very pleasant time; I never saw Bismarck so much at his ease, and so full of mirth and frolic."

From a letter written on several days of June, 1869, another glimpse of Bismarck may well be preserved.

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"Berlin, *June*, 1869.

"June 7, Monday, as I drove in the Thiergarten I saw a person, sitting very erect in the saddle, walking his horse, and followed by a groom. My horse is a fast walker and soon came near him. It was Bismarck on horseback, not in uniform, the first time I ever saw him out of military uniform, wearing a soft, slouching

hat, a rough sort of a citizen's coat and plainly just from his bed as a sick man. His smile, when he smiles, is inconceivably sweet; more than ever today, from his weakness. His greeting was so cordial, I walked my horse by his side, and so we went on for nearly two hours. His labours, this I tell you in confidence, have impaired his vital forces and he means, so he told me, before the end of the month to go to his place in Varzin. Illness disturbs his nerves and unfits him for the conflicts of parliament and the contradictions of determined antagonists. He talked to me a good deal of politics, of Austria's relation to France previous to the battle of Sadowa, of the queen, etc. His eye is quick to see everything in nature, and I speaking of nightingales, he came upon his garden, where there was a nightingale's nest. A *Neun Todter*, that is a butcher bird that kills nine before it eats one, had destroyed the fledgling; he and another went out to do execution on the murderer. He described how hard it was to find the nest of the criminal, till the other birds, seeing the police at hand, flew round and round the spot and so guided the officers of justice. Then asking of me the time, he said he would try to trot, did not know if he was strong eno' to do it; for he must not be late for dinner, lest his wife should scold. 'Your wife never scolds.' He laughed and said, she was exact in regard to time and he never let her wait for him at dinner. By the way she is one of the gentlest women in the world, not handsome at all, having won him by her sweetness of disposition, which gave promise of a good life. . . ."

To C. C. Perkins.

"Berlin, 12 *June*, 1869.

"I pretty much agree with you about the French elections: especially I regret Laboulaye's defeat. Of Thiers much may be said on both sides. He is of the family of Voltaire and set forth the loudest howl of them all for the temporal dominion of the Pope, for the primacy of France among Catholic powers, and other relics of Spanish bigotry. I think Paris and France have served him not unjustly; he deserved a rebuke: and I am glad he is re-elected. If in some instances untrustworthy radicals of bad antecedents are chosen, it is only because 'the timid good' shrunk from their duty. You are right in saying France is given to extremes: when the Protestants were driven out, France was maimed, and left to the struggle of extremes. She never has recovered—she never can recover from the effects of the last policy of Louis XIV: the course of her history was changed; the river left its channel and went now down cataracts now into swamps and marshes. However your wife and I are orthodox and we may ask what can you expect from the depraved nature of man, when left to its natural depravity? The present state of Paris is an artificial one. As to France it is moving and for a century has been moving towards political freedom. We protestants by our good doctrine of the direct communion of the individual with the divine, have made personal government and government with the strong hand impossible except as a transient dictatorship. . . ."

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"Berlin, 19 *July*, 1869.

"The public journals commented very much on our minister Washburne's speech at his presentation to the Emperor of France. His remarks (*in allusion to our differences with England*) that the U. S. *never* more earnestly desired the friendship of the French government, did not escape universal attention. For myself I adhere to the policy of reserve, and regret such intimations. Of course we cannot separate France and England on America, and it was foolish to think it possible; and knowing it to be impossible it was a mistake to confess the wish. I entreated him to do nothing of the kind.

"Cromwell tried hard to reconcile the power which he gained by the sword with the freedom of the English —he failed and his dynasty passed away. Louis Napoleon obtained power by force and repression; if he can support and transmit his power by other means than what he gained it by, he will work a wonder.

"The last day in the legislative corps was terribly stormy beyond what has been reported. They tell a story of Thiers, which is but partly true. It runs thus. Thiers to the extreme left: 'You have forced the government to concessions. Accept them; what will you more?' The left: 'We are resolved *de le renverser*.' Thiers: 'And what could you do then?' The left, in a frenzy: 'We would cut off his head.' Thiers: 'For what purpose—you would find nothing in it.'

"Let us rejoice, that France is in the way towards

the recovery of its liberties: and that the late popular triumph or at least partial success, is a guaranty of the peace of Europe. . . ."

The following extracts from a long letter to Mrs. Davis, January 31, 1870, are printed for the light they throw upon the social aspects of Bancroft's life at Berlin.

". . . What a troublesome time I have had of it in resisting the most importunate demands to be presented! The British Ambassador interposed to compel the presentation of one whom I had declined to present. Now the U. S. cannot surrender to the English representative the selection of Americans to be presented: that is inconsistent with our dignity. Besides, in the late civil war, the British might have chosen to present secessionists, and now would not select those more distinguished for their American patriotism. I have had a disagreeable strife; but luckily Bismarck, the King, the Queen, the Crown Prince, and now at last the Crown Princess recognise that I have acted wisely and express satisfaction at my having saved them from embarrassment.

"On Tuesday a sprig of the Austrian House, Archduke Charles Lewis, put the diplomatic corps to the trouble of waiting upon him. His visit had a little political significance; it was a mark of respect in return for the visit which the Crown Prince lately paid the Emperor on the way to Egypt. The archduke, by way of being very affable, spoke much to every one; which kept us all on our legs for nearly two hours. However,

he was good enough to confirm me in the opinion that New York is a large place, that Niagara Falls are worth seeing, and that you may travel by rail very rapidly from Glasgow to London.

"Wednesday night I was with my Wednesday Club. The astronomer Förster read a paper; we run to see Vesuvius spitting fire or Ætna: but the people in the sun have something grander, a jet of fiery flame, more than 90,000 English miles high. . . .

"At five [on Thursday], our academy met; one of its annual meetings; Trendelenburg was to have read the paper, but is very ill, so Curtius did it for him. The King, who is not strong after a bad cold from which he has just recovered, is obliged to be very cautious; but the Queen was there, and so was the Crown Prince. The address which Curtius, the excellent historian of Greece, read very well was more than an hour long. It is not permitted for the speaker to stand or play the orator on these occasions, he must sit and read. After the address followed two reports. I had just time to go home, change my clothes and repair to the palace, when the King and the indefatigable Queen made their appearance. Three American women came to court without invitations, of all which I was most perfectly innocent, and everybody knew that I was. The *cour* was the pleasantest I have ever known—because it was the shortest. Everything appertaining to the court ceremonies was gone through with; so that the spectacle suffered nothing in magnificence. The concert too was excellent: the pieces followed each other with great rapidity, and so it was not tedious. In former years I

could not get away till 2 or 3 in the morning—this year it was over at 11 and I was at home and in bed by 12. I took my nephew with me, and he was enchanted. He is a charming fellow, and pleases everybody; the Queen spoke with him, or perhaps I should say to him for I think he was too modest to say anything in reply, as she told him he could not be in better hands than in mine. . . .

"Last evening was von Keudell's *Polter Abend.* What is that? and who is Keudell? Keudell is in Bismarck's office, his most confidential friend; no longer young; will not in time to come be forty again. He is engaged to Fraulein von Patow, only daughter and child of their Excellencies von Patow; the father having been in time past a member of the King's Ministry. The lady, twenty-four or so old, possesses in her own right 3 or 400,000 thalers: the largest heiress in her own right just now in Berlin, and very well educated and all that. The night before a wedding friends throng to the house of the bride and make merry. The friends of Keudell and Patow were last night on hand, prepared for the entertainment, uninvited by the bride or the bride's parents. First a Minnesinger recited to music a programme in verse. Then the first tableau; an excellent old nobleman of the ancient time, with his daughter, and unseen musician sing how a maiden can capture a husband; that for the bride. Next came the bridegroom's turn; he is wonderfully skilled as a player on the piano and as a composer of music; and he holds a high place in Bismarck's office and heart. So his emblems are politics and music. Bismarck's daughter tall and stately, with

a harp in the hand, personated music; the young Countess Else Arnim, of one of the most distinguished families, young and superb, stood for politics in the tableau; and the poem which was sung commemorated these two great traits. 'The world, action, belongs to politics; heaven and the soul to music. The two are not strangers; true statesmanship is itself a divine music; and in the harmonies of the life of the people plays the melodies of the world's history,' and so on. Then came a picture 'tableau' of which the object was to commemorate Keudell's presence in the battle of Sadowa. Then a corresponding tribute to the bride, every one with song. Then a sight of Mount Rigi where the courtship began; then Nordeney, where it grew warmer; then a crowd of water nymphs, 8 or 9, on the shore of the Rhine, singing sweetly, and producing an enormous mussel shell; which is opened a little and then more, and then out springs the child countess von Oriolla, draped as Cupid, of seven or eight years, and she sings and acts her song, written for the occasion, inimitably well, aiming with her bow and arrow at von Keudell's heart, then piercing that of Miss von Patow, and then a stanza of delightful promises to both. On which one of Keudell's best friends, one of the best singers in Berlin society, appears suddenly in front of the pair, and sings the last stanza of Goethe's wedding song ending:

> Unzählige, selige Leute
> So ging es und geht es noch Heute.

"A world of talent was displayed in all this; the company was the best: Bismarck and his wife of

course—ministers, belles, beaux; of *not* German diplomatic ministers, I was the only one.

"After the songs, recitations, and tableaux I left; but there was a modest supper and then the young people were to dance till after midnight. Such is a German Polter Abend. Today the pair are to be married."

A letter to Mr. Davis later in the year contains a passage of some importance in relation to Bancroft's appointment to Berlin and continuance in office. Read in connection with the letter to Reverdy Johnson (January 2, 1868), this passage completes the story of Bancroft's political position during and immediately after the war. It bears date of August 2, 1870. After speaking of a poor appointment by President Johnson and the necessity of removing the office-holder in question, Bancroft says:

"That my name should have been brought forward on the occasion took me by surprise. Mr. Johnson from whom, with the entire concurrence of the Senate, I received my commission, made some very good appointments, and some that were very bad. The cause of my appointment as well as my antecedents give me a right to hold office under General Grant with perfect self-respect. I was what was called a Douglas Democrat, and on the second election of Lincoln, I voted for Lincoln. I was called from my retirement by Congress to pronounce the eulogy on Lincoln; and as a consequence I was offered the Mission to Austria.

This I declined for several reasons; but that which I gave was, that my regard for Motley would not suffer me to be his successor. When news came of a vacancy here, I received the commission through the Post Office without a word from or to me beforehand. General Grant wrote me a letter, strongly, very strongly approving the appointment. The nomination was given me at a time when I was known to have expressed myself most decidedly in favour of Grant as Lincoln's successor in the Presidency; and as I had filled the place with diligence and success, I was not surprised that Grant on his accession pronounced his opinion in the strongest and most unqualified terms in favour of my retaining the place. I have gained a position here which a new comer that should seem to displace me would gain but slowly, if at all. Yet my stay here is not without its sacrifices: and I have about it a feeling of independence which is very favourable to the faithful discharge of my duty as minister. . . ."

When this letter was written, the Franco-Prussian War had already broken out. Bancroft's personal observations of its progress and results are found in letters which it seems best to bring together at this point, in spite of a disarrangement of strict chronological order.

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"Berlin, 4 *September*, 1870.

"What a month have we lived, dear F——. The old contest between evil and good; and the victory as at

Marathon, and on the plains of Abraham on the side of civilisation and freedom. A people in arms crushes the degenerate hosts of despotism; and this restless spirit of mischief that had its abode in the Tuileries is at last to be exorcised. It could be done only by these signal victories. On the second of August Napoleon ordered the attack on Saarbrücken, and on the second of September he is a prisoner at the mercy of the man whom he had sent his ambassador to browbeat and insult. Yet the idea that France had a right to be the first power in central Europe was so fixed in the mind of every Frenchman, that you nowhere in France find a hearty condemnation of the war, but only of the inopportune moment at which war was begun. The apology of every one who had a part in bringing on the conflict is, that he was sure France would have been victorious. At Ems a brother minister of our *corps diplomatique* tried to reason with Benedetti;[1] he cut all short by refusing to listen to the counsels of moderation which were plainly the only wise ones, and said: '*il va de ma tête*,' that is the imperial party was so passionately bent on war, that they would have crushed any one who should have opposed them. There was nothing sincere in the pretended dread of a Hohenzollern on the Spanish throne; the house Sigmaringen-Hohenzollern are Catholic, and on the best terms with Napoleon. The last night before Napoleon's famous mad attempt at entering France at Strassburg, he passed in the house of H. Sigmaringen, the father of Leopold; and the old

[1] Count Vincent Benedetti, French Minister at Berlin, 1864–1870.

prince assured the Spaniards—Prince's agents—there would be no trouble from Napoleon; he (the prince) would take care of that; Napoleon owed him requital for former benefits; there could be no difficulty from that quarter.

"Gramont[1] owned as much. Being asked why he began the war, he gave as his excuse, that he put the question to Leboeuf, minister of war, '*Sommes nous prêts?*' and Leboeuf answered, '*Archi-prêts.*' 'But for that,' said Gramont, 'I would not have brought on the war; I had twenty ways of settling the Spanish question without a war.'

"If you read Thiers' speeches in the Chamber you find him speaking of the war as declared inopportunely, but never as declared unjustly. Here I have in my hand a letter from Laboulaye, hardly seven days old; he writes: '*Nous accuser d'avoir provoqué la guerre est un enfantillage. La guerre a été sottement declaré par un gouvernement incapable; nous avons été surpris; mais la guerre était fatale depuis Sadowa.*'

"King William went into the war most reluctantly; so after the terribly bloody but successful battles which drove Bazaine and his army back to Metz, he could say that he felt no pride in the victories which had been gained with the loss of so many of his people; but he consoled himself saying that at least 'he had a good conscience; he had done nothing to bring on the war.'

"Moltke whom I see very often called on me one day after the declaration of war by the French had been received, and while he was sending troops to the frontier:

[1] Duc de Gramont, French Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1870.

his busiest days. I said to him, he must dine every day: 'come dine with me tomorrow, [my wife was away] dinner shall be ready at the minute.' He readily agreed. I asked Friesen the Principal minister of Saxony, and my friend Watzdorf, sole minister of Weimar. Friesen brought with him the Saxon Envoy at this court, so we were just five at table. Moltke was at his ease; for he knew himself to be among friends. He spoke always with calm and composure; but when he expressed his indignation at being forced into the war, his manner was that of sorrow, the deepest, keenest sorrow mixed with anger. There was not a word of boasting; but his manner of speaking implied perfect confidence in the result of the war; but then he deplored the immense sacrifice of life which he foresaw as inevitable. He explained to us in a few words the former condition of the French army before Niel[1] became Minister: gave great praise to Niel, and to the improvements which Niel had introduced, and the better condition and greater efficiency of the French army through Niel's administration. But it was plain, from his composure, that he knew perfectly the defects existing in the French army at the moment of the declaration of war; and that he could continue composedly to send forward the German troops without fear of any precipitate invasion of the enemy. Indeed I drew from his words his intention of conducting the campaign on the soil of France, and his consciousness of being *able to do so*. Of England he complained: a word from her of firmness, spoken at the proper time, would have prevented the war; and

[1] Marshal Niel died the year before, in 1869.

the failure to speak that word was what would be remembered if England should be threatened with an invasion. The conversation was kept up for nearly three hours. I gave Moltke an account of a courtship on the part of one of his officers and the daughter of an American millionaire, on which I had been consulted by the friends of the father; and he gave me a full account of the extraordinary merits of the officer, not disguising a restlessness of nature that might make of him an uncomfortable husband. Friesen told a story of an American lady at Dresden that gave a crowded ball. Some one said to her, 'you have a very large acquaintance.' She answered in French, 'Oh! very large; cannot receive at once all the world; tonight *je n'ai que le* demi-*monde*.' At last Moltke looked at his watch and was surprised to see how long we had been together. I have not seen him since.

"But a story is told of him in the papers and I have heard it also from one who had read it in private letters. The battle of the 18th[1] was terrible; whole Prussian regiments mowed down; on one side at Gravelotte at about 7 in the evening, French masses of troops pressed upon the German right, whose decimated and wearied Prussian infantry began to waver. Night was coming in, and Moltke waited with painful impatience to make the victory complete on every side. He looked to the South-east for the Pomeranians to come up; at last, marching in quickest time, but not a minute too soon, they came in sight. As soon as they recognised his well

[1] The battles of Gravelotte and Rezonville were fought August 18, 1870.

known features, his name ran from rank to rank. He drew his sword, spoke a few words, turned his horse toward the heights that were to be carried and rode in advance, leading the attack. Hurrahs rose from thousands of voices; the officers cried, 'The chief of the general staff is in the close fight'; on which the Pomeranians stormed the heights with burning emulation and inconceivable swiftness, and carried one after the other. Moltke rode slowly to the king and said, 'The day is ours: the enemy retreats.'

"The scarlet woman of Babylon is in a bad way. Her Jesuits, and ultramontains and intriguers are all on the side of Napoleon. France is considered as the champion of Catholicism against protestantism. The old Pope being declared to be God on earth infallible (a monstrosity that cannot be paralleled since the days of the Cæsars) is sure of his infallibility, yet after all not quite sure. So in Spain they have got up the story, that to test the point, he writes down predictions of what the weather is to be; and buys tickets in the lotteries of what he holds to be lucky numbers; expecting the results to confirm his predictions."

To ELIHU B. WASHBURNE.

"BERLIN, 13 *September*, 1870.

"*My dear Colleague:* Your most welcome letter of the 9th is received. I judged Napoleon justly twenty four years ago; and have never wavered in my opinion of him. He has done France infinite evil; his defeat and captivity came like a thunderbolt from Heaven.

My joy is in the restoration of the republic; I trust it may have a fair chance to establish itself; may succeed and endure. Its enemies are numerous and strong and determined. Should it succeed Spain will certainly follow; nor Spain alone. But I confess I see dangers gather about its cradle. With you my prayer is for peace; but who in France will make a peace? . . ."

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"Berlin, *October* 3, 1870.

". . . In America you are getting further with French republicanism than Europe is as yet ready to go. Twenty years' despotism does not shape a country for popular self-government. Quite the reverse. There is the republican wine, but where are the bottles to hold it? Rochefort,[1] I am assured, is in the pay of the Orleanists. Trochu[2] inclines to them; Jules Favre[3] is an excellent orator at the bar; but not an administrative statesman.

"Empress Eugénie was of all the foremost for war. When she heard that Leopold had ceased to be a candidate for the Spanish throne, she burst into tears, for fear it would not come to war. Now she is said suddenly to

[1] Henri Rochefort, in 1870 a member of the government of national defence.

[2] Gen. Louis Jules Trochu, president of the government of national defence and commander of troops defending Paris, September, 1870.

[3] Jules Favre, minister of foreign affairs in the government of national defence.

have lost her good appearance, to have become haggard and old. . . .

"Do you wish to have some more guessing about the war? Paris it is supposed must surrender in a week or fortnight, as no army comes to its relief, its holding out is an absurdity. About the 10th the Germans will be ready to begin the siege in earnest. Metz has more provisions than was supposed. But that they are straitened appears from their sending out men to capture forty bullocks at a great loss of life. The meat used in the city is now chiefly horse-flesh. The city was not well provisioned as a garrison town; but by accident it had great stores. It was the point from which the army was provisioned; and the stores were not transferred to Verdun as much as has been supposed. So a month must be allowed yet before the garrison and city can suffer severely from hunger, or, think of capitulating.

"I cannot express to you how much I exult in the establishment of a republic in France. If it could be done successfully, Spain and I think all the so-called Romanic nations would follow. But I scarcely ever encountered a Frenchman who had the first idea necessary for the establishment of a republic; and if a republic should succeed, it will be as a compromise not as a first choice. Yet republican ideas are making immense progress in Europe, and reforming legislation. But in France the minority of the people can read and write; even among the officers taken prisoners are found those who can do neither. Education of the people, good morals, moderation, decentralisation, individual

liberty with deference to law—these are the conditions for organising a republic."

To Mrs. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"*October* 13, 1870.

"Dr. Evans[1] of Paris has been here, dined with us, and told us the whole story of the escape of the empress. On the morning on which the Napoleon Dynasty was deposed [Sept. 4] and the mob of Paris proclaimed a set of ministers, the empress was at the Tuileries, dressed in black as one who mourned for the captivity of her husband, with a black hat on her head, just going to church. On the first news she stood her ground; but on learning that the Assembly had given way, she caught up a thin aquascute spenser and went down the stairs of the palace to escape. The ascending crowd compelled her to turn back: all her people, all her household, men and women deserted her except Madame Le Breton. With Mad. Le B. she turned and went through the whole length of the Louvre, and came out at a little door opposite the Church Auxerrois or some such name—you remember the place well. She walked bravely with Mad. L. through the crowd, and drove for the Avenue Hausmann. There she alighted and when the fiacre was out of sight, the two women drove in another fiacre to the house of Dr. Evans. There was not in all Paris a French house, to which the empress could confide herself. Evans at this time was at the Tuileries looking out for the

[1] Dr. Thomas W. Evans, the well-known American dentist, long resident in Paris.

empress to take care of her and aid her flight. On returning home he found the two ladies in his private office, smuggled them upstairs into his wife's bed-room, (his wife being at Deauville and his servants being hoodwinked). There he gave them refreshment; went out upon the Boulevards to hear cries for the '*République*'; studied the avenue of escape from the city; returned to make beds for his illustrious guests (he would trust no servant) and his wife being a prudent woman who kept her wardrobe locked in her absence, could give them neither a change of linen nor a night-gown. The next morning Evans with a trusty American who was his assistant as dentist, and his two fugitives left Paris in his own carriage, and with his own horses and coachman. This carriage had on it the letter E. The empress said: 'My carriage was always marked as mine; hitherto with the crown: now with my name, E for Eugénie.' His horses being very good ones, he conducted the party without change sixty or seventy miles, as far as Lisieux. There with much diplomacy, he transferred the party to a hired carriage, and turning Lisieux, got into a village beyond it, where they halted for the night in a sorry public house, which at first could offer them but one room. Another was obtained at last; and the night went by. The next day the party reached Deauville; and Evans stopping at a distance from the hotel, took the empress on his arm, and without meeting a person, led her up stairs to his wife's apartments in the hotel. Mad. L. followed with his assistant and openly. Till then the empress had no outside garment of her own, except the little water-proof, and

kept herself comfortable by the coat of Evans. She had had no change of clothes, and but one pocket-handkerchief, which she herself washed in a glass of water thrice on her journey, laying it on her knees to dry. Brave as she showed herself tears came often, and by exposure to rain she caught cold. In the night at 12 the party stole over the sand to Sir John Burgoyne's yacht; and at five the next morning put to sea in a yacht of 30 tons burden. The wind changed: it blew a gale; the little boat tossed about like a cockle shell, but did not go down. So after 20 hours of terrible suffering she landed at Rye. Evans did not desert his party till he established Eugénie in a hired country house, and started her in the ways of English life: her housekeeping being arranged on an intended expenditure of 100,000 francs, that is $20,000 per annum. This rough outline Evans adorned with many details; principally of the good spirits of the empress, which by the way were in part hysterical; of her charming manner under circumstances of exposure, want of rest, want of fit food, etc. The most remarkable incident was, that of the imperialists not one single man stood by her, and only one woman.

"If you write to my sister, bid her live on: I shall not live to a great old age: (unless you call seventy or so great). . . ."

To HAMILTON FISH.[1]

"BERLIN, *October* 18, 1870.

". . . As to this war, Count Bismarck's words to me were: 'I clearly understand why your government

[1] Then Secretary of State.

should choose to be neutral'; at the same time he has always desired to cultivate particularly friendly political relations between Germany and the United States. Our foreign political interests almost always run parallel with those of Germany, and are often in direct conflict with those of France. Bismarck and the king were true to our union during our civil war, when France took sides against us. Germany respected the independence of Mexico; the French supported the Austrian adventurer. The United States were the first power to speak for the security of private property at sea in time of war; Germany is the only power which as yet fully adopts the American idea. Germany desires to follow the East-Asiatic policy of the United States: France, whose commerce with China is but one per cent. of the whole, intrigues for power through the monstrous demands of its Jesuit Missionaries. Germany like America is adverse to ultramontane usurpations; it was the French Republic which destroyed the Roman republic, and garrisoned the Papal dominions. Germany adopts from us the federative system; France, whether empire, monarchy, or republic, adheres to the system of centralisation. Germany leaves Spain to choose her own government and regulate her own affairs; and for 160 years France has steadily endeavoured to subordinate Spanish interests and policy to her own. The relations of Germany and formerly of Prussia to England are much the same as ours; and they have been so for a hundred years. And Bismarck loves to give the United States prominence in the eyes of Europe as a balance to Great Britain. If we need the

solid, trusty good will of any government in Europe, we can have it best with Germany; because German institutions and ours most nearly resemble each other; and because so many millions of Germans have become our countrymen. This war will leave Germany the most powerful state in Europe, and the most free; its friendship is, therefore, most important to us; and has its foundations in history and in nature.

"The more I learn of the present condition of France, the more deeply does the country seem to have been injured by the corrupting, wasteful, and immoral government of Louis Napoleon. What would have become of the United States, if a government like Buchanan's could have lasted twenty years? And Buchanan personally was honest though he submitted to the corrupt. Nothing remains in France truly great, except the kind, gentle, laborious people, who have been poorly instructed and much abused, and yet under proper leaders and for proper ends is capable of every exertion and of every sacrifice. . . ."

To HAMILTON FISH.

"BERLIN, 21 *November*, 1870.

"Paris is soon to fall; and the great Drama of the history of France for the last three centuries will be closed. All the traditions of Louis le Grand, and of old France, are of a kingdom that is now no more. A new France will rise up, but no more of the same character, or ambition, or restlessness. The French who have never been willing to own the truth about Louis XIV, inasmuch as they continued his politics, will now

write of him without circumlocution. The coming France will be no more the continuation of the old, than the Italy of today is the Italy of Machiavelli and Michel Angelo, of Julius the second and Cesar Borgia. . . .

"And now one little suggestion of my own. This present European trouble has been made possible in part by the attributes conceded to Ambassadors, relics of the grandeur and the follies of the middle age, at war with modern free institutions. I want your *permission*, not instruction unless you prefer, to write a paper for the perusal of the German government, on doing away with the distinction between the grades of Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary. If you give this leave to me, in a private letter, I alone shall suffer, if I do not do the work well; but if nearly all the powers approve, it will not injure our standing generally. Best regards to Mrs. Fish. Why do we not see at Berlin some of the travelling members of your family? It will be an interesting moment here, on the return of the King, and at the palace."

To Mrs. Hamilton Fish.

"Berlin, 11 *December*, 1870.

"When Thiers passed through Vienna on his way from Petersburg to Tours, he met Ranke, the historian, and demanded of him 'Why is the war continued? We have discarded the emperor: with whom are you fighting now?' 'With Louis Quatorze,' answered Ranke, and there is a great deal of truth and significance

in the words. Louis XIV, for all his despotism, his inhuman bigotry, his passion for wars, has even till now remained in the eyes of the French as the great king: because he, more than any one else, used the concentred power which he held, to make conquests all along the eastern frontier. France reveres his memory, because his arms carried the French boundary to the Rhine. The hour has come for the monarchy of Louis XIV to expire: it dies hard, but die it must; and France can be regenerated only by renouncing every thought of territorial conquests. If the new state will but give up the passion for dominion, and acquire the grace of modesty, its passing misfortunes will be the clouds that usher in a better day of culture and freedom. The ignorance of its present statesmen is appalling: Bismarck, in one of his conversations with Thiers, complained of the employment of the Turcos in an army of a civilised nation. 'It is but just reciprocity,' replied Thiers; 'you speak what is quite true; we do employ the Turcos, just as you do the Uhlans.' So little did he know of the ethnology of his own continent; he thought that the German Lancers, who are picked from the best families in Prussia, were composed of men of some barbarous horde that had its ranges somewhere in the heart of Europe. And what Frenchman can be supposed to be better informed than Thiers?

"You can hardly call the Germans a slow people. On our Thanksgiving day the diet of North Germany assembled to unite all Germany, and turn the Union into an Empire, the President into an Emperor. The work has been consummated in seventeen days. The assent

of the Southern chambers of the several states will be obtained before New Year, and an era of glory and peace will dawn upon Germany with the first day of January. When King William succeeded his brother, he was already advanced in years, and wrote to the instructor of his son, that 'he did but break the path' for him; and see the old king has greatly enlarged the dominions of Prussia, has united all Germany, has re-established the empire, and before this letter can reach you will be proclaimed emperor. So much for having a minister like Bismarck, and a warrior like Moltke; and being a man of energy and exemplary industry himself. Paris has not yet surrendered; Trochu and Ducrot[1] hoped to break thro' the German lines, and leave the surrender to others. But they must themselves taste the bitter cup. Meantime the fortifications of the great city are become all but impregnable; and on the other hand the German lines are impassable. They were strong enough before the last sallies; and since then they have been made much stronger; so that military science and the arms of a quarter of a million of men can achieve no more in the way of construction. The empress Eugénie speaks passionately of the falsehood of Trochu; he promised to defend the regency, to protect her with his life; and he was the first to raise the standard against her and drive her from the Tuileries. I see my old acquaintance Benedetti promises to publish all his dispatches: the object being to prove that he gave correct information, and never misled by wrong

[1] Gen. Auguste Alexandre Ducrot, commander of the second army at Paris.

advice. So it may seem: but he was a willing tool of ignorant ministers. . . ."

Throughout these private letters the reader will have become conscious of Bancroft's sympathy with the German cause and arms. So long as this sympathy was known but privately, there could be no objection to it. But the impression took root in France that the United States officially rejoiced in German victories—even that General Grant sent his personal congratulations to the Prussian sovereign whenever the Germans defeated the French in battle. Mr. Theodore Stanton has controverted this idea in a pamphlet of which he has said[1] that only three copies now exist. To support his contention he prints a letter which Bancroft wrote him December 5, 1885, flatly denying that any congratulatory telegrams were transmitted through the American legation at Berlin from Grant to King William, and saying further that an examination of the archives of the State Department at Washington has shown that there is no authority whatever for the statement. Nevertheless both Grant and Bancroft incurred the wrath of no less a Frenchman than Victor Hugo. In his *L'Année Terrible*, under the heading *Decembre*, the poem *À la France* begins:

> Personne pour toi. Tous sont d'accord. Celui-ci
> Nommé Gladstone, dit à tes bourreaux: merci!
> Cet autre, nommé Grant, te conspue, et cet autre,
> Nommé Bancroft, t'outrage.

Under the heading *Novembre*, there is, moreover, an

[1] In note to author, Feb. 16, 1906.

entire poem entitled "Bancroft," of which by no means the least abusive, lines, arraying France and Bancroft against each other, are these:

> Vous l'insultez. Qui donc avez-vous insulté?
> Elle n'aperçoit pas dans ses deuils ou ses fêtes
> L'espèce d'ombre obscure et vague que vous êtes;
> Tâchez d'être quelqu'un, Tibère, Gengiskan,
> Soyez l'homme fléau, soyez l'homme volcan,
> On examinera si vous valez la peine
> Qu'on vous méprise; ayez quelque titre a la haine,
> Et l'on verra. Sinon, allez-vous-en. . . .

It is easy to believe that whatever Bancroft may have felt and expressed, the sensitive French, smarting under defeat, could hardly have failed to exaggerate a sense of hostility. It is no less easy to understand Bancroft's German sympathies, quickened both by his intimacy with the German leaders and by his life-long democratic instinct which revolted from Napoleon III and all his works.

While the war was at its height, Bancroft enjoyed one of the most gratifying honours that fell to him during his years at Berlin. It is described in the letter of October 3, 1870, to Mrs. Davis, from which a quotation has already been made.

"On the ninth of September, fifty years ago, in 1820, I took a degree as Doctor of Philosophy, in the University of Georgia Augusta at Göttingen. It is the German fashion to renew that degree for any one that survives fifty years; and so it fell to my lot this year to

celebrate my jubilæum. I was very modest and quiet about it; but the record at Göttingen told the tale, and brought me all the honours that old age can in its own right gather in. Personal friends began to call, almost before I had taken my breakfast, and you know my hours are early. A little before eleven a circle of my more immediate Berlin friends gathered about me, and Curtius as their representative read me a poem, full of affection and good will. While this was going on, the deputy from the philosophical faculty of Göttingen, Waitz, a first-rate man, came in, attended by Prof. Zachariae, and after making me a most beautiful address, presented me a new diploma. I answered him in German, giving an account of Göttingen in my day. The University of Berlin followed; and their Rector, accompanied by many of the most distinguished Professors, in quite a long address congratulated me on the day. This gave me an opportunity of reviving my recollections of the great men of Berlin a half century ago, for I knew Schleiermacher, and W. von Humboldt, and Hegel, and Wolf and many more. A deputation from the Berlin Academy of which I am a member came next, and read a written word to me, exquisitely expressed, and conceived in the spirit of friendship. A delegation from the law faculty of the University then came forward and said that by a unanimous vote I had been declared a Doctor of Laws *honoris causa;* but that, as I had already had the same degree from Bonn, it was contrary to the statutes to confer the degree for the second time. Beside these formal acts, personal friends came in. My wife being absent, two charming Amer-

ican women kept me in countenance by their gentleness, and made my guests happy by serving them the best of old wines. By and bye good old Ranke came in; and after cordial greetings added: 'but I must after the true German manner kiss you'; and he put his arms around my neck and gave me a hearty kiss. So it went on all day long. Such of my diplomatic colleagues as knew of the fête called to congratulate me.

"And now this 3rd of October I am three score years and ten. I have invited a large party of my Berlin friends to sup with me, and I hope with plenty of good talk on their part and the best Havana cigars to keep my guests well employed till after midnight. Among them all there will not be one as old as I; and this distinction which they cannot dispute, no one of them will envy."

To add to the pleasure of his jubilæum he received a telegram from Bismarck in the field.[1] Bancroft's acknowledgment of it follows:

To Count Bismarck.

"Berlin, *September* 30, 1870.

"I was equally surprised and delighted that while you are tasked with the work of renovating Europe, you yet found time to send me lately a friendly congratulation on my being spared so long. It is indeed a great

[1] The telegram is dated Meaux, September 20, and reads as follows: "Erfahre erst hier von ihrem Doctor Jubilaeum. Kann nicht versagen Ihnen meine herzlichste Gratulation zu senden, welche auch nachtraeglich freundlich aufzunehmen bitte."

happiness to survive till these times, when three or four men who loved nothing so much as peace and after long and hard service were only seeking to close their career in tranquillity, win during a war of defence more military glory than the wildest imagination conceived of, and in three months bid fair to bring the German hope of a thousand years to its fulfillment. So I gratefully accept the good will, conceded to my old age; for old age, which is always nearest eternity, is, this year, mightiest on earth; this German war being conducted to its close by the aged. You, to be sure, are young; but Roon must be classed among the venerable; Moltke is within twenty-three days as old as I am; and your king in years and youthfulness excels us all. May I not be proud of my contemporaries?

"Retain for me your regard in the little time that remains to me."[1]

Of the historical work which Bancroft accomplished in Berlin, the tenth and final volume of his History, published in the year of his return to the United States, 1874, is the tangible evidence. Its individual title-page defines it as *The American Revolution, Epoch Fourth Continued. Peace Between America and Great Britain*, 1778–1782. The paradox of concluding a ten-

[1] Upon this letter, probably more than upon anything else, the French feeling against Bancroft was based. According to Professor Sloane: "Bismarck gave the letter to the German press. It was translated back into English and printed in the London *Times*, read by the French, and contained to their irritated minds a meaning which was never in the writer's thoughts." See *Century Magazine*, January, 1887.

volume *History of the United States* at a point seven years before the United States came into existence has frequently been pointed out. Though the historian, seventy-four years old when this volume appeared, was by no means ready to lay down his pen, it was clear that he could not carry to completion the plan upon which he had begun his work more than forty years before. Yet the preface to this tenth volume betrays no abatement of the zeal with which Bancroft brought together his materials. Again, as in England, his high official place gave him opportunities which he turned to the best account. The archives of the Prussian and other German governments were put at his disposal. The Representatives of the United States, besides friends and officials in England, France, Austria, Russia and Holland, rendered every species of aid at their command. In Berlin itself he was fortunate in securing for assistants such young historical students as Mr. William M. Sloane and Mr. Austin Scott, equipped with the powers which were to make them respectively professor of history at Columbia and president of Rutgers College. Bancroft's correspondence through these years at Berlin has been seen to abound more in observations of the life about him than in references to his own historical labours. Indeed it could have been only through his habits of persistent industry that a life so full of social and official activities held also a place for the production of such a book as Bancroft's tenth volume.

The results of Bancroft's diplomatic work at Berlin may be studied in the naturalisation treaties between

the United States and the German governments, preserved in the records of our international relations. The importance of these treaties, which have been said to mark a new epoch in international law,[1] can hardly be overrated. To these must be added Bancroft's share in the convention respecting Consuls and Trade-Marks (1872) and his important *Reply and Memorial on the Canal de Haro* which brought about the German Emperor's award of arbitration favourable to the United States in the controversy with England over the boundary line between Vancouver and the San Juan or Haro islands on the coast of Washington. The bare record, however, calls for illumination, and that is found, so adequately expressed that any rephrasing would be superfluous, in Professor Sloane's *Century* article already drawn upon to frequent advantage:

"In 1867 he was sent as Minister to Berlin to establish the right of the immigrant German Americans to renounce their old allegiance and accept an exclusive American citizenship. It was against the usage of Germany and against the policy of the War Department of Prussia and all the other North German States. If the German American revisited his old home, he was liable to be seized and forced to do all the military service which, by the laws of Germany, could have been required of him, had he not emigrated. Bancroft was to obtain relief in the case. The argument that weighed much with Bismarck for granting the wish of the

[1] See "A Memorial of George Bancroft," by George Lockhart Rives, *Century Association Year Book for* 1891. New York, 1892.

United States was, that the Germans in America might not be interrupted in their domestic intercourse with their parents, with their brethren, with the members of their families who remained at home; but the question assumed a special importance, as it was the first time that by a formal act the principle of renunciation of citizenship at the will of the individual was recognised. But the desire to be on amiable terms with the United States and to promote the continuance of affectionate intercourse between those Germans who had elected the United States for their home and the friends whom they had left behind them prevailed with Bismarck.

"The British Minister kept watch over the negotiations, with the determination to abide by the result of the treaty. The first result of Bancroft's success was to relieve German-Americans from military service in Germany. The next good result was immediate; namely, the renunciation by England of her claim to indefeasible allegiance, and to the right to impress into the British service a former British subject who had become an American citizen. The North-western boundary having been settled by treaty, Bancroft, while United States Minister in Great Britain, had perceived an incipient effort of a great English interest to encroach on the territory which had been acknowledged by the treaty to be a part of the United States. Just before the British administration had entered on the design to disturb the recent treaty, he took occasion in a dispatch to that government to make, incidentally, an official statement of the true interpretation of the

section, without even a hint that there could be any controversy about it. In that way the passage in the dispatch did not provoke an answer; but there was left in the English archives an official description of what the boundary was under the hand of one who was in the American Cabinet at the time the treaty was made. By and by the importunities of interested persons in England, who possessed a great party influence, began to make themselves heard, and the British Government by degrees supported the attempt to raise a question respecting the true line of the boundary of the North-west, and finally formulated a perverse claim of their own, with a view to obtain what they wanted as a compromise.

"The American administration had of course changed, and the President and his Cabinet, having had no part in the negotiation, agreed to refer the question to an arbiter. They made the mistake of consenting that the arbiter, if there was uncertainty as to the true boundary line, might himself establish a boundary of compromise. The person to whom the settlement of the dispute was to be referred was the President of the Republic of Switzerland. The American Secretary of State chanced to die while the method of arrangement was still inchoate. Bancroft at once wrote to the new Secretary, urging him not to accept the proposal of a compromise, because that would seem to admit an uncertainty as to the American title, and to sanction and even invite a decision of the arbiter in favour of a compromise, and would open the way for England, under an appearance of concession, to obtain all that she needed.

Being at the time United States Minister at the court of Prussia, he advised the Government to insist on the American claim in full, not to listen to the proposal for a compromise, but to let each party formulate its claim, and call on the arbiter to decide which was right, and urged it to select for that arbiter the Emperor of Germany. Now the new Department of State had never accepted the plan of settling the dispute by a compromise. They were willing for a reference, if each State would insist, each for itself, on its own interpretation of the treaty. The Department of State at once consented that the referee should be the Emperor of Germany, and left the whole matter of carrying out the American argument to Bancroft. The conduct of the question, the first presentation of the case, as well as the reply to the British, were every word by him, and the decision of the Emperor of Germany was unreservedly in favour of the United States."

The semi-public character of two acts of Bancroft while minister at Berlin makes this perhaps the best place to record them. A letter of June 21, 1870, to Dr. D. W. Gorham, a trustee of Phillips-Exeter Academy, announced his purpose of devoting two thousand dollars to the endowment of a scholarship in the school.[1] "I desire to repeat for others that come after me," he said, "what was done for me." One year later, July 4, 1872, he wrote to President Eliot a letter, reprinted every year in the Harvard University Catalogue, offering the sum of ten thousand dollars to endow the

[1] See I., p. 19.

John Thornton Kirkland Scholarship, to preserve the memory of the benefactor of Bancroft's own youth, and to place the advantages of foreign study within the reach of young deserving scholars. The gift expressed another generous impulse to make returns in the future for what the donor himself had received in the past.

Reference has been made in a previous chapter to Bancroft's liberal expenditures in the prosecution of his own work. A letter from Germany (July 7, 1869) to Little, Brown & Co., discussing terms for a proposed new edition of the History, touches with some definiteness upon this point. Bancroft speaks of the original arrangement with his publishers, and proceeds: "That was before I had invested much capital in the work. Since then the expenses of various kinds in collecting materials, MSS. and books, in journeys, time employed in researches, writing, copyists, money paid for examination, etc. etc., might be put without exaggeration at fifty or even seventy-five thousand dollars." Fortunate the scholar who can thus forward his pursuits, and fortunate the friend of scholars who can perform deeds of beneficence such as that which brought to Bancroft a letter from Emerson, beginning as follows:

From R. W. Emerson *to* George Bancroft.

"Naushon, Masstts., *September* 21, 1872.

"*My dear and noble friend:* I received three days ago the surprise of your letter and heroic gift. It requires more than gratitude,—it requires somewhat

heroic also to dare to receive it; for from such hands such a gift is a sort of crown, which might well make the recipient search himself for equal deserts. I cannot say that my seeking was quite satisfactory. Perhaps it lost itself still in saying—Did I not receive this Olympian prize from an Olympian? Well, I shall turn the order into coined money, and hold it subject to any claim of you and yours spoken or unspoken. I therefore here record, that, I have received from George Bancroft the sum of one thousand dollars which he is moved to send me on hearing the burning of my house."

Before passing to an interesting episode of Bancroft's experiences in 1872, a letter from the end of the preceding year, giving full expression to his religious belief at this time, must not be overlooked:

To Rev. Dr. Samuel Osgood.

"Berlin, *Christmas,* 1871.

"My delay in answering your most friendly letters, which to me were very dear, is due to my wish to express to you very fully my thoughts on the exceedingly interesting topics to which they related. But we will discuss them for hours together when we meet. I will now only say that I remain as ever in time past in the faith that Christianity is the religion of reason, is Reason itself; and, therefore, I most cordially agree that it existed from the beginning, and is the whole of the eternal Reason itself. In other respects I am with increasing years more and more pleased with the sim-

plicity and freedom of the New England congregational system; and seeing the abuse of symbols, am quite in full sympathy with the Puritan dread of the use of them. The Jesuits all over the world are now striving to introduce a system which denies the use of reason in religion; and denies the right of the individual to a direct dependence on God. To carry out this system, civilisation must go back; the beams of the state must decay from dry rot; and the eyes of the people must be put out. I adhere to the protestant doctrine, the great teaching of Luther, that every man is his own priest; and this is but the statement in respect of religion of the principle which divides ancient civilisation from modern. . . ."

The episode which differentiated 1872 from all the other years of Bancroft's residence in Berlin was a journey, beginning October 26, to the Orient. A pocket diary, *Notiz-Kalendar für* 1872, preserves many immediate impressions of scenes and persons in Constantinople, Athens, Cairo and other places. A few selections from them must suffce. At Constantinople Bancroft profited much from the companionship and guidance of George H. Boker, then United States minister at the Sultan's court. Many visits were paid to the ministers of other nations and to Turkish officials. There are notes of an interview with the Patriarch of the Greek Church, a dinner with the President of the Turkish Council, visits to the Christian missionaries and their schools and to the Greek Literary Society of Constantinople, of which Bancroft was made a member.

An entry of November 12 reads: "First to the Sultan.[1] Pipes, coffee; pipes and holders of cups wreathed with diamonds. Then to the audience through many rooms. Sultan very civil; said his country was backward, beginning to make progress, must go on." The somewhat scanty record is filled out with descriptions of the sights of the city and its neighbourhood.

In Athens there was more to delight the travelling scholar. The entry for November 15 reflects an enthusiasm almost youthful:

"Reached the Piræus before sunrise. The rosy-fingered dawn gave us welcome. Our U. S. consul was there with a carriage, and we were soon in the very good quarters engaged for us in the Hôtel des Etrangers. Called on Francis.[2] With Luders and Mr. and Mrs. Boker took a drive, to take a first view of all that is most interesting in Athens. Then dropping the Bokers, returned to inspect the Dionysiac temple, the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, ascended the Akropolis, where we examined everything, and enjoyed the brilliant sunset. The colour of the mountains and the sea were all that the poets describe; returned to Hotel in the dark.

"This morning the moon became full; so at eight Luders and I once more climbed the Akropolis, and passed two hours in viewing every part of it, and of the sea and country around it. All beautiful beyond words.

[1] Abdul-Aziz.

[2] John Morgan Francis, United States Minister to Greece, 1871–1873.

Got to bed at eleven. Fatigued, but after a most interesting day, rich beyond conception in everything beautiful."

Other days were devoted to Marathon and Eleusis, and in Athens all things and men appealing to the student of antiquity and of modern progress, seem to have been visited. On November 18, Bancroft wrote in his note-book: "At 12.30 with Boker presented by Francis to the King and Queen,[1] who are both very agreeable, well-mannered and well-disposed young people, in conjugal life a model."

Not until November 30 did Bancroft turn his back upon Greece. An Austrian steamer landed him at Alexandria December 3. A letter to Mrs. Bancroft three days later describes the first experiences of Egypt.

"CAIRO, *Friday, December* 6, 1872.

"I wrote you a week ago from Athens, from which place I parted on Saturday last. Sunday morning, after gliding over smooth seas, I found myself in Syria; and had just time to see the white city with its white marble pavement and clean streets, wedged in between the hill tops and the sea. At half past eleven we were under steam in a small boat of 500 tons for Alexandria. The boat knew how to roll and pitch, but the sea was so still, that she had little chance to show her qualities, and in fifty hours I was in Alexandria. I had a welcome beyond expectation; the American consul general Beardsly came on

[1] George I and Queen Olga.

board to my aid; an aid-de-camp of Gen. Stone[1] likewise; as well as representatives of the Government; for in Constantinople I had made the acquaintance of Nubar Pasha, the minister of foreign affairs and he, of his own accord, had given notice of my coming. I had time in the same afternoon to see Cleopatra's needle; the pillar called Pompey's; and several ruined statues of granite or porphyry. It was the second day of the Baisaur; I was most amused with the scenes in the public squares; the dances of the black Nubians; the plays of the children; men and women and children are to be found here as elsewhere. Wednesday in the morning express train I went up to Cairo; declining with every expression of gratitude the Khedive's[2] offer of hospitality, I took my quarters in the New Hotel. If you want to know the December weather of Cairo, think of the *selectest* day in June, with the morning cool, but not quite so chill as our summer mornings, and you have it. I had just time to drive about Cairo, to the citadel, where I went into the mosque and tomb of Mehemet Ali, built of Alabaster, columns, arches, wainscoting all of alabaster, which on the inside is polished. From the terrace a fine view of the Nile, of the pyramids,

[1] Gen. Charles Pomeroy Stone, U.S.A., who in 1870 accepted a commission in the Egyptian army, and later became chief of the general staff.

[2] Ismail Pasha, whose extravagant administration brought about the Anglo-French control of Egypt in 1876. In 1872, when Bancroft saw him, he had held the title of Khedive for six years, and was in the full swing of introducing Western methods at unlimited expense. Bancroft's observations of his plans and character have, therefore, an historic significance which seems to justify the space devoted to them here.

of the city, all under the golden light of the sinking sun. In the evening I went to the theatre where a French play, founded on a Creole adventure in New Orleans, was well represented. The Khedive was an attentive listener: so too ladies of his Harem were evidently there, though hidden by the lattice of their boxes.

"Thursday at 9.40 the Khedive sent a carriage for me. The horses were splended ones, the servants all English. Arrived at the palace the prince received me on the stairs without any formality of presentation, and led me himself, unattended by any into an interior room, where we sat close together, face to face, and chatted for three-quarters of an hour. He explained his plans for progress here in Egypt; the rule as to slavery, which is, that any slave man or woman by the simple expression before the police of a wish to be free, thereby becomes free; his principle of liberation which he advocates practically and theoretically; his plan of judicial reform and colonisation; the cause and character of his present strife with Abyssinia. He again offered me a carriage during my stay which I declined; but I could not refuse his aid in enabling me to ascend the Nile. After this I received many visits, particularly of Mariette Bey, the rival Egyptologist. Then Gen. Stone took a seat in my carriage and we drove to see a garden, menagerie, kiosk and palace, which the Prince has built on a magnificent point west of the Nile, on the Nile Banks. Thence to an Arab wedding festival in one of the great families. The bridegroom, as he came in after a double file of light-bearers, who opened for him to pass through, came in the procession past me, halted to give me his

photograph and to exchange greetings and good wishes, and was then snatched up into the Harem. We knew of the moment of unveiling the bride by the cry of joy uttered by the many voices, all as one, and which we heard just as clearly as if we had been behind the scenes. Then followed the great Arab female singer singing from within the Harem to us outsiders. . . ."

On December 9 the diary contains a significant account of a second talk with the Khedive:

"At 9½ at the Khedive's. He stood at the head of the stairs, and came down part way to meet me, and kept up a very lively conversation for more than an hour.

"The excellence of the Museum the Khedive attributed to the rare ability of its chief superintendent.

"Khedive said: everybody laughed at him as he summoned a Parliament, but there must be a beginning; he wished to see if Arab sheiks could interest themselves in administration not in political questions. The experiment successful. The power of the body from the first restricted. But it can demand to see all the papers relating to the treasury receipts and disbursements: can object: and does object, thus as to the money from the treasury used for Cairo; the city must have museum of its own. The Khedive said further, he devised a system of local self-government in local affairs: a body for the affairs of a province or aggregation of towns, members chosen by double election; for the villages magistrates elected by themselves. In time hopes a

more regular representative participation in Government. Proceeds not according to ideas of France, or England or Belgium, but studying the habits and usages and character of the people, and developing the new institutions out of the old.

"Immense progress in female life. Fifteen years ago, women could not read or write; now are educated, take an interest in public affairs, read a newspaper, converse on what they read. No authoritative interference to break up the Harem; but it is left open to influence of intercourse with Europe.

"Khedive says our civilisation comes from the West, from Europe. The nearer the relation, the more rapid the progress. Northern Egypt is more advanced than southern, because more connected with Europe. Rule, not to shock established usages, but to leave the way open for the action of better influences, by perfect toleration of religion and of European usages and manners, under whose influence the evils of Mohammedanism will disappear. Of old the Jews had evils; under their intimate connection with Christians, those evils, polygamy, etc. disappeared. Why should not Christian influence wear off by degrees what is bad in the Mohammedan religion and bring the Moslems into as great a harmony with Christians as the Jews? . . .

"Khedive spoke very largely of the necessity of establishing courts of final jurisdiction in Egypt, as a preliminary to extensive colonisation. If an Englishman suffers a wrong from an Arab, he can pursue the Arab in a court: if on the other hand, an Arab is injured by a foreigner, he must seek redress in Vienna,

or Paris, or London, or wherever else the man belongs. Colonisation not to be favoured on such terms."[1]

The notes of a journey up the Nile, December 11–25, differ in no important respect from those of many other travellers. On December 23, however, there are some rough memoranda upon the Khedive which should not be omitted:

"The Khedive very affectionate, adores his mother, a Circassian born in Constantinople, loves his children, is very generous, gives money and aid to the unfortunate, his charity exceedingly great. A very extraordinary man, brought to power by rapid, not to have been expected deaths. A Macedonian by descent, one of the greatest public men of his day. He reigns, and alone. Does everything himself, jealous of great ability, and sets aside men of capacity, will do all himself. There he is alone, with clerks for ministers, forms no school of statesmen, so no permanence to his system. The Parliament cannot in a day change the habits of sixty centuries, so no foothold there. The oldest son is in the hands of the Ulemas, and is a fanatical Mussulman, who, if he succeeds, may overturn the present system. But will he succeed? The grant establishing the succession was obtained by very heavy bribes: (N. B. perhaps also the Sultan wished to establish a precedent, and imitate it in the order of succession in Turkey.) and the brother in the event of the Khedive's death, may say, what was got by bribes, may be got rid of by

[1] The system of mixed courts was introduced in 1876.

bribes. So the early death of the Khedive would be followed by a cataclysm.

"His manner of statesmanship is indirection. He does not take the strait road to his object."

In the five remaining days which Bancroft spent in Cairo he saw much of Emerson and his daughter: "a chivalrous angel to Ellen and me," Emerson called him, with full appreciation of Bancroft's taking him to breakfast with the Khedive and showing him the sights of the place.[1]

Writing to Mrs. Bancroft from Cairo on the 30th Bancroft said:

"I might have sailed today for Brindisi, but the Khedive made a breakfast party for me. R. W. Emerson had arrived, and I asked an invitation for him. We went together to the palace at 12 o'clock. I presented him to the Khedive. At table I sat on the K's right; while Emerson had a place at the side of the Vice-Roy's third son, the one who was educated at Oxford, and who speaks English exceedingly well. My cook, said the Khedive, is an Egyptian; and certainly the breakfast was the best prepared that I ever tasted."

Later in this day, the 30th, Bancroft took his departure for Italy and the north, making a journey of many pleasant interruptions, and reaching Berlin on January 21, 1873.

This was Bancroft's most extended absence from the

[1] See Cabot's *Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, II, p. 659.

scene of his duties in Germany. In other years he made other, shorter expeditions; in 1868 to Italy where he saw much of George P. Marsh in Florence; in subsequent seasons to the German cities, to Switzerland, and to Denmark. Mrs. Bancroft's poor state of health necessitated long absences in climates more gentle than that of Berlin; but whether she was there or farther south, the pleasant house on the Thiergarten was always a centre of hospitality, open alike to American travellers and students, of whom the University was attracting many, and to the leaders in every department of the characteristic life of Berlin, political, academic and social.

When, at the completion of nearly seven years, Bancroft asked to be relieved of his German mission, the demonstrations of respect and regret were rather those of fellow-countrymen speeding the departure of a native son than of citizens bidding farewell to a visitor from a foreign land. One of the American students whom Bancroft befriended in Berlin has told that when he presented notes of introduction from the American minister and historian to Mommsen and Ranke, each of these men exclaimed in turn, "He is one of us."[1] Such, indeed, was the universal feeling. "The Royal Academy," says Professor Sloane, describing Bancroft's departure, "gathered for an unwonted purpose—to give him a farewell dinner, where words of affection and appreciation were spoken by the aristocracy of German letters to the great representative of America. Finally, the

[1] Notes of conversation with Prof. James K. Hosmer, August, 1907.

universities of Munich, Berlin and Heidelberg united in a farewell greeting, the words of which contain sentiments which might satisfy the most soaring ambition."[1]

The diary for the very day of leaving Berlin, June, 1874, has the entry, "Richter[2] and wife came to bid farewell. Dorner almost wept." Following this is a list of those, beginning with Nothomb, the Belgian minister, who came to the cars for the last good-by. On the same day Mr. Bancroft received from Bülow, Secretary of State of the Foreign Office, a letter announcing "that his most gracious lord, the Emperor and King, has condescended to appoint the presentation of his imperial likeness to the honourable Ambassador on the occasion of the latter's leaving his present official position. His Majesty is convinced that the sympathetic understanding of the internal and external development of Germany which Mr. Bancroft has exhibited at a grave and critical time has been in a high degree favourable to the fostering of the friendship between Germany and America which is as important as it is welcome to his Majesty. His Imperial Highness wishes, therefore, to give by this token lasting expression to a commemoration not only of his esteem for the person of the honourable Ambassador, but also of his thanks and his recognition of the latter's long and successful efficiency in Prussia and Germany.

[1] See *Century Magazine*, January, 1887.

[2] Presumably Gustav Richter, painter of the portrait of Bancroft reproduced for frontispiece of Vol. I. "It was painted by him," wrote Bancroft in 1886 to Gen. J. G. Wilson, "with affectionate interest, and he gave most unusual attention to it as a whole and in its details."

"The portrait is from the hand of the artist Bülow of this city, and is, nearly finished, in his studio in this palace, whence its shipment will follow to the place which the Ambassador will graciously please to indicate." This portrait now hangs in the Art Museum of Worcester, Massachusetts.

Another letter of the last day in Berlin brings the German annals to a fitting end, for it presents Mr. Bancroft's own brief list of his most important diplomatic achievements. It is addressed to the Hon. Hamilton Fish, Secretary of State:

"American Legation, Berlin, 30 *June*, 1874.

"*Sir:*—My last act of public duty before leaving Berlin shall be to ask you to express to the President my grateful sense of the honour which he has done me in the language which he used in granting me my discharge from the public service. I can receive it with a good conscience for I have never so far as I know missed an opportunity of carrying out the instructions of the department and promoting to the best of my ability the honour and the welfare of the country. You in Washington can hardly conceive the degree of comfort secured to our German fellow-citizens by the peaceful security which they obtain for their visits in Germany by the treaty of naturalisation. From 10,000 to 15,000 of them come yearly from America to their mother country and now without suffering the least anxiety where before many of them in order to see their friends were obliged to remain on the other side of the frontier or come into Germany stealthily, running the risk of arrest every hour.

"During the war between Germany and France great efforts were made to turn the current of opinion and the feeling of the German government against the United States on account of sales of arms to one of the belligerents. It was to me a very great source of satisfaction that complaints were happily prevented.

"Our happy co-operation in the San Juan arbitration led to the most pleasing and satisfactory results. Take it for all in all my mission to Berlin has rounded off in the pleasantest manner the years of my life that have been devoted to the public service and I may say that my unsolicited appointment by Mr. Johnson and my new commission from Mr. Grant have made to me the years of my great old age the flower of my life."

There still remained a month of Europe to be divided between Paris and London. In Paris the diary records, among many entries, his dining with Thiers and a distinguished company, renewing acquaintance with the galleries of art, and the spending of morning hours with his son George and his French grandchildren. In London, where he arrived July 9, there were many old friends to be seen and old places revisited. The diary enables one to supply the dates in a memorandum written in some later year, and illuminating a biographical topic of wide interest:

"Mrs. Carlyle and Carlyle's Biographer

"On the [eleventh] of [July] in [1874] as I was in London, on my way home from Berlin, I remember

Carlyle, with whom, in the years which I passed in England, I was intimately acquainted. So very often both he and his wife visited together in our family. I was the channel through which his correspondence passed with Ripley and other of his friends in America. I found him cordial and pleasant; he spoke to me of himself without any words introducing it from me, of his own improved condition in point of fortune. It seemed to be strongly present to his mind that it was but a melancholy enjoyment to him; and he said of it: 'Ah, if she were but here to enjoy it,' referring to the condition in which I had known them both jointly. I never heard a man in conversation seem more sincerely moved by grief at the thought of having been bereaved of his wife. Reflecting upon this incident and what happened I could not but have my thoughts directed to what occurred after Carlyle's death, when his papers went into the hands of his biographer. There were papers by her which showed that she at one time (but as I think in a moment of accidental distress of mind, but not of malice aforethought) had spoken of her desire for a divorce and other things showing that very unhappy things had passed between them. Now I believe that Carlyle never meant those should come before the public; but that he did not himself mean to expose himself to the charge of having suppressed anything which his wife's reputation and character might require. I believe that his purpose was to hold himself perfectly neutral and independent, and that he gave the papers into the hands of the biographer, leaving it for him to burn the papers and suppress them. If

she had uttered anything against him during his life to others, that would of course stay there; and if anybody saw fit to make it public, would have raised a question as to which of them deserved reproof. The biographer, unhappily, receiving the papers chose to take the part of making his narrative and his publications such as would most astonish the public and attract a certain sort of curiosity. In my opinion he should have suppressed and burned the papers thus put into his hands, as the wife had not persisted in her desire; as she had returned to the position of closest domestic relations, the real relation of husband and wife, and had never really severed them or made any serious attempt to sever them, this matter became a sort of episode that may have had no sort of justification and at any rate was suppressed and abandoned by herself. This I say in defence of the lady, for it is she on whom the bad fame would light of having scattered about her deadly poisonou weapons against him to reach the life of her husband when she herself had by continuing with him agreed in the most solemn manner that no such cause existed."

The last of the London entries is under the date of August 1, 1874. When Bancroft, full of honours and years, landed in America, in the same month, all that should accompany old age lay fortunately before him.

IX

THE FINAL YEARS

1874—1891

"For me, who am so old that it is not of much matter after I return what spot I may choose wherein to draw my mantle around me before I depart, Washington seems the most desirable place, partly for the fine public library, partly because it is not a city of business." Thus Bancroft wrote from Berlin in 1869. When he did return in 1874, and changed his residence from New York to Washington, he wrote to another correspondent: "I am sorry for many reasons to leave New York; but my wife could not have survived the climate." In the letter from which this statement is taken, occur also the words: "The true manner of living in old age is to gather a circle of friends who are devoted to the culture of truth, think with the freedom of men gifted with reason, and patient or even fond of differences of opinion. If but half a dozen of such men would but meet weekly at dinner at my house I should find instruction and delight, and beguile the infirmities of years by the perennial, never-ending enjoyment of friendship and intelligence." The pleasures of society,

which he had always relished most keenly, were thus an important element in his plan of life for the years remaining. In Washington, where he established himself in a commodious house, 1623 H Street, he found a variety and stimulus of social intercourse unattainable elsewhere in America. This was supplemented by all that was most satisfying in the summer society of Newport, of which he grew increasingly fond—the Newport of "the little white hand" which Mr. Henry James has recently celebrated as the symbol of its vanished charm. Indeed it is hardly possible to regard Mr. Bancroft in this final period of his life without placing a special emphasis upon its social and domestic aspects.

For the specific pleasures of these years, the methodical jottings in the diaries record many fulfilments of Mr. Bancroft's purpose to gather congenial friends at his table. His hospitality was constant and abundant; and in the satisfaction which it gave to him and his guests Mrs. Bancroft heartily shared. Many persons who enjoyed it take pleasure in recalling the German servant, Hermann, who had come from Berlin with Mr. Bancroft, and remained his faithful attendant almost to the end. The privilege of long service is even said to have extended his care at times to the most frequent guests at dinner, to whom he offered *sotto voce* advice upon wines to be avoided or taken. The host himself had in some measure outgrown Emerson's definition of him in 1847 as "that man of eager manners."[1] They were characterised much more harshly in an article printed in *The Nation* immediately after

[1] See Cabot's *Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, II, p. 503.

his death; and a keen social observer who knew him in Newport early and late has privately described him as "fantastic." All are at one, however, in the testimony that the Bancroft of Washington and Newport society in the seventies and eighties was a man greatly mellowed by years and the broad experience which had rubbed away many of the angles of earlier days.

A reminiscence of this mellower Bancroft is kindly provided by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell: "My early recollections of him are of his delightful house in Washington, and the memory is charmingly vivid. I was staying with him when he asked me whom I would like at his table. I said, 'Why not have the Presidential aspirants?' He threw up his hands with a gesture of applause quite common with him, and said, 'Delightful! we'll have them.' Accordingly we had General Sherman, his brother the Senator; Thomas F. Bayard, Mr. Pendleton, and there may have been others, possibly Blaine. They are lost from the imperfect index called memory.

"We fell to telling stories after dinner, and General Sherman was very amusing. I recollect after telling him a story of himself I had heard in the South, Mr. Bayard called from the end of the table, 'What is that story you are telling? Is it a story about the Confederates?' The General said 'it is a story about the rebels, who may also have been confederated.' I told the story which may be found, I think, in *Characteristics* or *Doctor North and His Friends.*

"After this little cross fire of appellatives Mr. Bancroft very prettily said, 'Fill your glasses, gentlemen. Let

us drink to the memory of dead confederates who are no longer rebels,' and then in an aside to me, 'After all, Doctor, it was a civil war and it is time to begin to be charitable in the use of labels.'"[1]

There is every evidence, moreover, that, in the important social life in which Mr. Bancroft was a conspicuous figure, he was valued as a guest no less highly than as a host. His standing in this second capacity is clearly suggested by a remark ascribed to President Arthur—that the President is "permitted to accept the invitations of members of his cabinet, Supreme Court judges and—Mr. George Bancroft." This indeed represented the social side of an official recognition in Washington which was Mr. Bancroft's alone. Typical expressions of it were the vote of the Senate, January 16, 1879, "That the Honourable George Bancroft be admitted to the floor of the Senate"; and, ten years later, the provision, at the Centennial Celebration of Washington's Inauguration, for a seat for Mr. Bancroft with the Cabinet Officers, the General of the Army, the Admiral of the Navy, and a few other officials of the highest rank, directly in the rear of the President and the Supreme Court. To be Mr. Bancroft in the private life of Washington was, in other words, equivalent to holding one of the most distinguished positions in public life.

The three other pleasures of Mr. Bancroft's final years may be called his three R's—of reading, riding and roses. The files of correspondence and the

[1] From letter of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell to the author, Jan. 1, 1908.

diaries abound in references to these pursuits. A new book of importance, in whatever field of literature, rarely escaped his vigilance, and the booksellers of New York, London and Berlin were constantly called upon to keep his shelves and tables supplied. Of Mr. Bancroft as a rider it is extraordinary to note the number of persons who preserve the remembrance—regarded by each almost as a peculiar possession—of seeing him on horseback. The short, slender, white-bearded man, evidently of great age, must indeed have impressed himself upon all wayfarers in Washington and Newport, for nothing but stormy weather kept the intrepid horseman from his daily ride at three o'clock. We have seen that even while he was a student in Germany his riding began.[1] When he was eighty-eight he jotted in his diary: "Find time for exercise, or will have to find time for illness." A few days later he notes a riding engagement with Mr. Spofford, Librarian of Congress, who has kindly provided some Reminiscences from which the following passage is taken: "His working habits were regular, and well adhered to. All the mornings were devoted to the *magnum opus* on which he was engaged, and in those hours he saw no visitors, save in exceptional cases. After a light lunch and an hour's rest he was ready for the saddle, setting out usually at 3 P. M. with me as a frequent companion. The suburban roads around Washington, on both sides of the broad Potomac, became as familiar to us, by years of trotting over them, as the streets and avenues of the city itself. When he

[1] See I, pp. 74–75.

was eighty-five years of age, we thrice rode to the Great Falls of the Potomac, on the Virginia side of the river—sixteen miles each way—returning the same day without fatiguing his elastic frame. He always said that the habit of equestrian exercise which he kept up through life, even while residing in London and in Berlin, kept him fresh for literary work, and contributed to health and long life. Somewhat sensitive to cold, we had an agreement in winter weather not to ride when the thermometer was below forty degrees; but the mild Washington climate, where an afternoon temperature of 40° to 50° is rather the rule than the exception in winter, gave abundant opportunities for this cheering and healthy exercise. Sometimes the street children, watching Mr. Bancroft's approach with his flowing white beard (which he always wore long in later life) would shout, 'Here comes grandfather Santa Claus on his fine horse!'" At Newport, at least on one occasion, comment became even more directly personal. "He was thought imprudent by some of his neighbours," Dr. Mitchell has written in the letter already cited, "and one of them, Mr. Lawrence, said to him when he stopped his horse, 'Are you not very imprudent at your age to be riding on horseback?' To which Mr. Bancroft replied, 'My dear Lawrence, are you not far more imprudent at your age not to be riding on horseback?'"

If the reading and riding were chiefly for his own pleasure and profit, the roses were generously employed for his friends. The pleasure they yielded Mr. Bancroft himself makes itself clearly felt in the multitude of letters to "rosarians," as he delighted to call his

fraternity, amateur and professional, in many places, American and European. The same pleasure declares itself in the diary notes upon the first blooms of spring, from such and such a plant, and many other memoranda of the Washington and Newport gardens. The Newport place indeed bore the name of "Roseclyffe," and gardeners' catalogues included the "George Bancroft" rose, so called, to be sure, in compliment rather than by that right of creation which gave to the *lilium Parkmanni* the name of a younger historian. But the friends of Bancroft were the chief beneficiaries of his taste for roses. Upon them, in sickness and in health, he heaped the offerings of his gardens, and with them left many a fragrant memory.

The pleasures of these years could not have been enjoyed so keenly by any but a man of extraordinary vitality of spirit and body. When he was seventy-six Mr. Bancroft wrote on the fly-leaf of his diary: *Est Animus victor annorum et senectuti cedere nescius.* It was his spirit indeed which knew not how to yield to old age, and with his spirit his body kept pace. The vitality of both of these forces might be illustrated by numerous instances, but a single letter, written on the seventy-eighth birthday will suffice:

To J. C. Bancroft Davis.

"Newport, R. I., *October* 3*d*, 1878.

"I was driving a pair of horses; an inner trace broke loose and whipped the horse on the nearest side and then the other, playing backwards and forwards.

They ran furiously, but I steered them safely through a herd of bullocks, passed a heavy cart and carriages, having no chance but to hold on till I could tire the horses out; the road, on which I was, came to an end and I had to turn to the right or the left, a sharp angle; I did this successfully, but as my whole strength was thrown upon the reins I was swept by the centrifugal force out of the carriage upon my head, left shoulder, and left side. The head was much cut, bled profusely, and is doing well, giving no trouble whatever. The shoulder joint is neither dislocated nor broken; but there is a small fracture in the shoulder blade, and one of my ribs is broken. There is a contusion of the left side, and I have little power of moving my left arm. The lungs have escaped any lesion, though they suffer from the shock. The hips, and all below them, are perfectly uninjured, so that I can walk; but on account of my broken bones I am strictly ordered to keep my bed, and I know not when they will let me return to Washington, certainly not for three weeks. I have no fever whatever, pulse calm and steady, and temperature of the body just what it ought to be.

"The lady, whom I was driving, showed the most heroic self possession and touched the ground safely perfectly uninjured."

It should be added that by October 23 he was well enough to make the journey to Washington, rejoicing in the healing of his wounds by first intention.

It is evident, moreover, that all the pleasures of Mr. Bancroft's old age were those which are joined with

entire freedom from financial anxiety. Without ever having engaged in lucrative pursuits he had managed his affairs with marked shrewdness, and was now reaping the comfortable results. To a well-known Boston banker whose advice had materially helped him, he wrote in 1880: "Had I fallen into intimate relations with you earlier, and so been sure of safe investments of my earnings, I might now contribute more largely to the comfort of others. I suffered much from the beginning of active life, and have been carried through, first by following my father's example and living always within my income; secondly by untiring industry; and thirdly by the most punctilious exactness in money matters, so that Mr. Sturgis of Boston once wrote me, he had never in his life known one who was equally so." To the comfort of others, however Mr. Bancroft was at this time making liberal contributions, in both the inner and the outer circles of kinship. There were also benefactions similar to those which he made from Berlin, in recognition of early benefits received by himself. Thus, in memory of Captain Samuel Ward of Lancaster, his mother's brother-in-law, the intimate friend of his father, and one of those who took part in defraying his own college quarterly bills, he enriched the Lancaster Town Library in 1878 with the "Captain Samuel Ward Library Fund" of one thousand dollars. In 1882 he proposed to the Mayor of Worcester a plan consummated in 1885 by the establishment of the "Aaron and Lucretia Chandler Bancroft Scholarship" of ten thousand dollars to perpetuate the memory of his parents through "the liberal education of some young

native of Worcester who in the schools of the city may prove his ability, and yet neither he nor his parents may have sufficient means to meet his expenses of residence at the college or university of his choice." Through this medium the earliest influences upon his character had their open requital, even as Exeter and Harvard had already received it.

The pleasures of the present and the paying of personal debts to the past might well have seemed a sufficient employment for the remaining years of a man as old as Mr. Bancroft when he returned from Germany. At seventy-four he might have sung with his younger friend,

> "It is time to be old,
> To take in sail,"

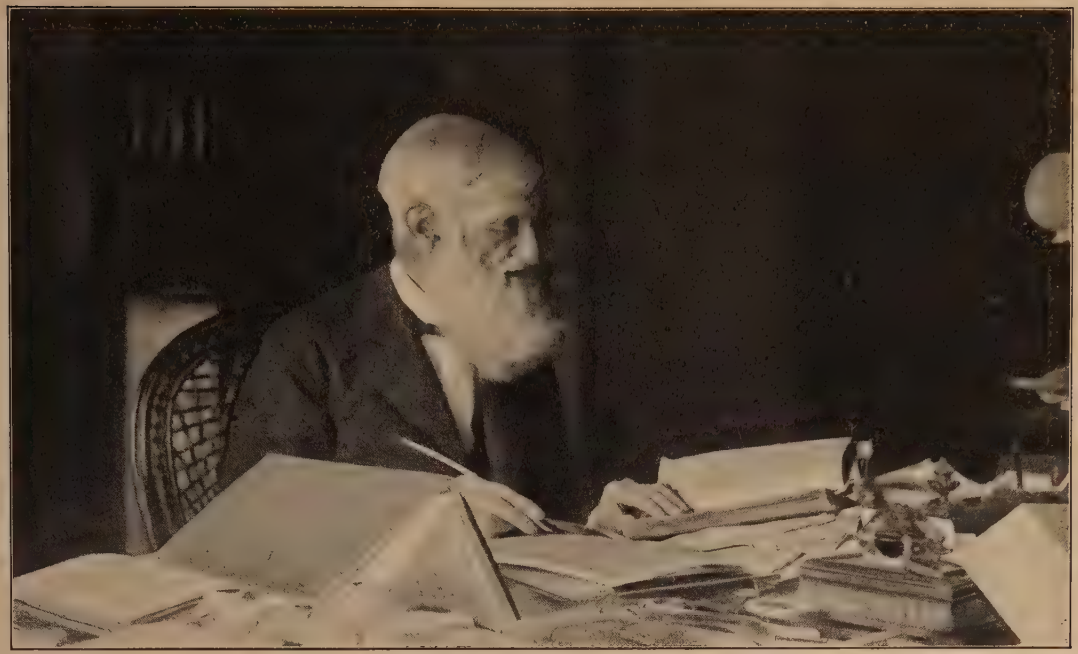
and none would have scorned a repose well earned. But in 1874 the disabilities of advancing years were still so slight as to be negligible, and the history of the United States stretched for nearly a century beyond Bancroft's record of it. The tenth volume, published in this year of his return, ended with the United States and Great Britain at peace. The centennial celebration of the national existence was near at hand, and Bancroft set about his part in it—the preparation of a Centenary Edition of his work in six volumes. The Prefatory Note to the first of these is dated December, 1875, and tells the reader that for more than forty years the author had been receiving from many sources new instruction and new materials. "The notes and papers which have thus been accumulated," he says,

"form the groundwork of the present revision, to which a solid year of close and undivided application has been devoted. Every noteworthy criticism that has come under observation has been carefully weighed, accepted for what it was worth, and never rejected, except after examination. The main object has been the attainment of exact accuracy; so that, if possible, not even a partial error may escape correction. A very few statements disappear before the severer application of the rules of historical criticism; some topics, heretofore omitted, find their place; and simplicity and clearness have been the constant aim.

"The gratitude due to the invisible, the impartial public, whose service alone is freedom, can be shown only by continuing the pursuit of truth so long as there is light."

The result of all this labour was an edition of the history much improved in the convenience of form, and in spirit reflecting the temper of its author somewhat mellowed by age. To the sincerity of his desire, never more compelling than in the later revisions, to get at the final truth of history, a strong testimony is found in the words of Robert C. Winthrop—perhaps the stronger for coming from a president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, with a previous and succeeding president of which Bancroft, as we have seen,[1] had violently differed on questions of accuracy. "I think," said Mr. Winthrop, "from all I have heard, and from much that I have personally known, that no man ever laboured harder to get at the truth, as to the events or

[1] See I., p. 238–9.



GEORGE BANCROFT IN OLD AGE

From a photograph taken in his study in Washington

the men whom he described, than George Bancroft. Nor can I hesitate to avow my conviction, however he may have sometimes erred, that the truth of history was uppermost in his aims and efforts from first to last."[1]

With truth and completeness both before his eyes, there was more than revision to be done. The logical end of his work, since he could not possibly carry the theme over into the nineteenth century, was the inauguration of the federal government. No sooner, then, was the Centenary Edition published in 1876, than Bancroft undertook a fresh enterprise—the *History of the Formation of the Constitution of the United States of America*. With all the spirit of one whose lifetime is ahead, he entered into extensive correspondence in search of unpublished papers bearing upon the subject. The Library of Congress, a few years before Mr. Bancroft's coming to Washington to live, had acquired, says Mr. Spofford in his Reminiscences, "the extensive historical collection of Peter Force, rich in Americana. Here Mr. Bancroft found a great mass of materials, in pamphlets, books, newspapers and manuscripts, illustrating the years 1783 to 1787. . . . He made very thorough use of these materials, through his secretaries, and by diligent personal perusal, often expressing his pleasure at finding so much aid, especially in the early newspapers and pamphlets, in the Library." The new work, in two volumes, was published in 1882.

In the preface, we find a recital of the sources upon which he was empowered to draw. Help had come

[1] See *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, 1890–1891, p. 303.

from every quarter, as also from Bancroft's own acquisitions in the past. In these were included even his recollections of the visit he had paid to Madison in 1836.[1] "Scarcely one who wished me good speed when I first essayed to trace the history of America," wrote Bancroft in his opening chapter, "remains to greet me with a welcome as I near the goal." Now he was writing for a world changed in many of its vital conditions as "in the living objects of personal respect and affection." Yet he wrote with little or no diminution of the vigour of his earlier days; and if the volumes are swelled in bulk by including at the end of each a collection of "Letters and Papers illustrating the Formation of the Federal Constitution," the number of Bancroft's original pages is nearly double that of the arrayed material. In whatever aspect it may be viewed, it is an extraordinary production for a man whose years were seventy-six when it began and eighty-two when it ended.

On May 15, 1882, he wrote to his sister, Mrs. Farnum:

"Congratulate me on my release for the present from the cares and toils of an author. Last Saturday my two new volumes on the Formation of the Constitution were published in New York and short as is the time which has elapsed I already received evidences of a warmer welcome from the public in my old age than at any previous time in my life. I inclose to you one of the reviews which has already appeared and which at

[1] See I., p. 217.

least will be a proof to you that my book is received with a hearty welcome. I shall take the earliest opportunity that presents itself to send to you a copy, not that you should wear out your eyes in reading it as I have done in writing it, but only that you may share with me the satisfaction that a period of rest affords me.

"Let us old folks cheer one another as we draw nearer and nearer to the shores of eternity which are already in full sight. I contemplate my end with perfect tranquillity thinking death should be looked upon neither with desire nor fear. . . ."

But the period of rest was short-lived. The Centenary Edition did not satisfy him as the final presentation of his work—if only because it did not include the History of the Constitution.[1] This had been committed to D. Appleton & Co., of New York, for publication, and it may well have seemed desirable to place in their hands a complete edition of the history. Whatever the motives may have been, we find him hard at work in 1882 on the six-volume edition which bears on its title-

[1] In *Fifty Years among Authors, Books and Publishers* (New York, 1884), the author, J. C. Derby, wrote (p. 322): "I said to him that I thought the title of his book was something of a misnomer, inasmuch as he had not written a history of the United States, but rather a history of the colonies down to the adoption of the Federal Constitution. He replied that when he began he did not expect to finish the history very soon, but did expect to get along faster than he did, coming down to near 1830. . . . He thinks it can be called the History of the United States, since he has written the History of the Constitution, as the history of the United States begins with the united resistance of the colonies against Great Britain."

page the words, "The Author's Last Revision." The desire to leave no stone unturned is shown in such letters as one to Francis Parkman, asking, "if perchance you have taken note of any matters where I have gone wrong." In Parkman's reply (June 4, 1882), a widespread feeling about Bancroft's work in general expressed itself: "It must be a prodigious satisfaction to contemplate as one of the results of your crowded life the grand monument which you have built on such a vast and solid basis of research. It is a work which the boldest man would hardly hope to finish or dare at the outset to contemplate in all its extent. It is a marvellous triumph to see it so nobly achieved."

The preface to the "Last Revision" is dated October, 1882, the first volume, 1883, the last, 1885. "There is no end," says the preface, "to the difficulty in choosing language which will awaken in the reader the very same thought that was in the mind of the writer. In the form of expression, many revisions are hardly enough to assure strict correctness and propriety. Repetitions and redundancies have been removed; greater precision has been sought for; the fitter word that offered itself accepted; and, without the surrender of the right of history to pronounce its opinion, care has been taken never unduly to forestall the judgment of the reader, but to leave events as they sweep onward to speak their own condemnation or praise."

Upon the actual process of revision, an interesting light is thrown by a passage of the Reminiscences supplied by Mr. Spofford: "His temperament was naturally ardent and poetical, but had been schooled to a

wholesome restraint by long experience and reflection. The rhetorical and ornate style of portions of his History was much chastened in the final revision; and in this he owed much to the refined taste of Mrs. Bancroft, who read much of the proofs, and who was an accomplished, if sometimes severe, critical reader in an extended range of literature."

For the results of the revision a concrete illustration of the method employed will be more telling than any extended attempt at analysis. In the first volume of the first edition (1834) there is a passage descriptive of Virginia and its life. This passage was selected for special praise by the *American Quarterly Review*, of September, 1834, which called it "peculiarly striking as a vivid picture of the physical aspect and social condition of the colony of Virginia." Evidently the taste of the day was gratified by the manner here employed by Bancroft. The passage remains virtually unchanged even in the Centenary Edition. To show the changes wrought by the author's last revision the paragraphs from the volume of 1834 and that of 1883 are here printed side by side:

1834.	1883.
The genial climate and transparent atmosphere delighted those, who had come from the denser air of England. Every object in nature was new and wonderful. The loud and frequent thunder-storms were phenomena that had been rarely witnessed in the colder sum-	The clear atmosphere, especially of autumn, and the milder winter, delighted the comers from England. Many objects of nature were new and wonderful: the loud and frequent thunder-storms, forest, free from underwood, and replenished with sweet barks and

mers of the north; the forests, majestic in their growth and free from underwood, deserved admiration for their unrivalled magnificence; the purling streams and the frequent rivers, flowing between alluvial banks, quickened the ever-pregnant soil into an unwearied fertility; the strangest and the most delicate flowers grew familiarly in the fields; the woods were replenished with sweet barks and odors; the gardens matured the fruits of Europe, of which the growth was invigorated and the flavor improved by the activity of the virgin mould. Especially the birds with their gay plumage and varied melodies inspired de-delight; every traveller expressed his pleasure in listening to the mocking-bird, which carolled a thousand several tunes, imitating and excelling the notes of all its rivals. The humming-bird, so brilliant in its plumage and so delicate in its form, quick in motion yet not fearing the presence of man, haunting about the flowers like the bee gathering honey, rebounding from the blossoms out of which it sips the dew, and as soon returning "to renew its many addresses to its delightful objects," was ever admired as the smallest and the most beautiodors; trees in the season clothed in flowers of brilliant colors; birds with gay plumage and varied melodies. Every traveller admired the mocking-bird, which repeated and excelled the notes of its rivals; and the humming-bird, so bright in its hues and so delicate in its form, quick in motion, rebounding from the blossom into which it dips its bill, and as soon returning to renew its many addresses. The rattlesnake, with the terrors of its alarum and the deadliness of its venom; the opossum, celebrated for the care of its offspring; the noisy frog, booming from the shallows like the English bittern; the flying squirrel; the myriads of pigeons, darkening the air with the immensity of their flocks, and breaking with their weight the boughs of trees on which they alighted—became the subjects of the strangest tales. The concurrent relation of Indians seemed to justify the belief that, within ten days' journey toward the setting of the sun, there was a country where gold might be washed from the sand.

ful of the feathered race. The rattlesnake, with the terrors of its alarms and the power of its venom; the opossum, soon to become as celebrated for the care of its offspring as the fabled pelican; the noisy frog, booming from the shallows like the English bittern; the flying squirrel; the myriads of pigeons, darkening the air with the immensity of their flocks, and, as men believed, breaking with their weight the boughs of trees on which they alighted, were all honored with frequent commemoration, and became the subjects of the strangest tales. The concurrent relation of all the Indians justified the belief, that, within ten days' journey towards the setting of the sun, there was a country, where gold might be washed from the sand; and where the natives themselves had learned the use of the crucible; but definite and accurate as were the accounts, inquiry was always baffled; and the regions of gold remained for two centuries an undiscovered land.

In this beneficent change nothing but a question of style was involved. The Revision as a whole went much further, effecting rearrangements and corrections which left the volumes truly representative of the lifetime of labour devoted to them.

A visitor from Tennessee in 1880 wrote for a Nashville newspaper some impressions of Mr. Bancroft, as he found him in his library at Washington. Merely for the picture of the historian characteristically at work in the period under review, a fragment of the article is worth reprinting:

"I was conducted upstairs and ushered into a room of fair dimensions crowded with books of all sizes and shapes, atlases, manuscripts and portfolios scattered on chairs, sofas and tables, in admirable disorder. Such an accumulation as I had never seen nor imagined, save when the priest was ransacking Don Quixote's library.

"Suddenly arose from this *omnium gatherum*, a small, thin gentleman, with bright eyes and long white beard; advancing, he extended a small, warm hand in a cordial, nervous manner. A moment's glance assured me that he was exceedingly busy, which was corroborated by his begging to be excused, and fixing the next evening for my visit. Mr. Bancroft is more indefatigable in his eightieth year than the greater number of literary men in their fortieth. Rising at six, sometimes an hour earlier, he breakfasts at eight and works until two or three, often taking no lunch in the meantime. He employs only a copyist and assistant who aids him in his investigations. He rides on horseback an hour or more in the afternoon, and spends the evening, unless he has an engagement, in seeing his friends and acquaintances."

A passage from Mr. Spofford's Reminiscences sup-

plements this picture: "In personal habits Mr. Bancroft was a model of regularity. Dining at seven or half-past seven, he did no writing or study afterwards, but spent his evenings wholly in domestic or social intercourse. He was abstemious in food and drink, and said that he consumed not more than one-half of what had been customary in middle life. He enjoyed good wine, but always in moderation. Between nine and ten every evening, tea was brought in, and served with light biscuit or cake to such visitors as happened to be present with the family. He was fond of the old-fashioned game of whist, and played occasionally with Mrs. Bancroft and congenial friends. By eleven o'clock he had retired, waking always at an early hour of the morning.

"His social qualities were of that genial and frank nature peculiar to gentlemen of the old school who had seen much of life. To ladies he was singularly courteous and deferential. I once heard him say to a lady visitor, well known in literature, 'Madam, I have been all my life on my knees to the sex'; and some people fancied his bearing and speech to very fair young women needlessly effusive."

Engrossed through all this period as Mr. Bancroft was with the great undertaking of his life, he yet had time for a lively interest in passing events, especially those which were related to the history of his country. The Legal Tender decision of 1884 was one of those events. In his *History of the Formation of the Constitution* Bancroft had gone carefully into the question of paper money,[1]

[1] See Vol. II, pp. 132–137.

arriving at the conclusion that "the adoption of the constitution is to be the end forever of paper money, whether issued by the several states or by the United States, if the constitution shall be rightly interpreted and honestly obeyed." His distress and astonishment at the Supreme Court decision of March 3, 1884, from which Justice Field alone dissented, were very great. The importance of the matter in his eyes is shown by a "Memorandum by Geo. Bancroft, dictated 7 March, 1884," recording his going to the capitol on March 3 with Chief Justice Waite, whom he had seen the night before, and whom he left at the entrance to the court room, "never doubting the nature of the decision." Two months later he wrote to the Chief Justice as follows:

To Chief Justice Waite.

"Washington, D. C., 6 *May*, 1884.

"I was greatly obliged to you when you put it in my power to listen to the opinion of the Court as delivered by Mr. Justice Gray on the issue of paper money. The respect and affection that I bear you leads me to say to you that I never in my life have been so surprised as when I caught the nature of the decision of the Court. I had before its delivery given the most full attention to the subject and had expressed in my *History of the Formation of the Constitution* the conclusion to which I arrived. I have again examined the question and have been perfectly reassured that the historical statement I had published is entirely correct;

and not only so, I think I have the means of proving to the satisfaction of every one of the majority of the Court who will calmly and fairly listen to a questioning of its opinion, that the ground which I took is the only correct one. The historian like the judge must strive for impartiality, and the only way in which impartiality can be obtained is to seek the truth for the sake of truth. The historian like the judge must be superior to prepossession and to pride of opinion. I have been over the ground again and have found only evidence after evidence making clear the intention of the authors of the constitution and the meaning of that instrument on the point which has been questioned. I do not myself think there is any doubt whatever about the meaning of the constitution, but I have put together in my mind, and shall soon put it upon paper, the grounds for this belief and shall make them public. In this I am sure you and your associates who know how loyal I have always been to the Court will see nothing on my part but evidence of a love of truth and respect for what seems to be a duty."

That which he planned to put on paper is preserved in a pamphlet, "A Plea for the Constitution of the U. S. of America, Wounded in the House of its Guardians," which appeared nearly two years later.[1] With all the fervour of confident belief Mr. Bancroft reviewed the constitutional case against paper money, and brought his Plea to an end with these words:

"What I have written is the fruit of many hours, em-

[1] *Harper's Handy Series, Issued Weekly*, February 5, 1886.

ployed in examining the laws of our period of colonial life, as well as in the study of our own constitution and of the corresponding history and affairs of many lands. I may utter these last words of admonition as assurances of that love of country, of liberty and of truth that has been the rule of my life, and still glows in a heart which must soon cease to beat." More than two years later still (in 1888) a New York editor appealed to him for a contribution, and received these pregnant words in reply: "I have your letter asking what changes had better be made in the constitution. I know of none; if any change is needed, it is in ourselves that we may more and more respect that body of primal law."

Besides the volumes and the pamphlet published in these years of extreme age, several magazine articles gave proof of Mr. Bancroft's untiring industry. In February of 1885, the *New York Ledger* printed an article from his pen on Washington, and in the *Century Magazine* of July of 1885 and July of 1887 appeared respectively a brief paper by him on Henry Clay and a longer article on John Adams.[1] A more remarkable production was his review, in the *North American* for February, 1885, of Dr. Holmes's life of Emerson. Five years earlier Dr. Holmes, in concluding a letter to Mr. Bancroft, had expressed the truly Autocratic hope "that Time who is breaking his teeth in vain attempts on your perennial youth will lose them all before he gets the better of you.' When Mr. Bancroft came to review the biography of their common friend, he was capable of producing fifteen excellent printed pages of summary

[1] See I., pp. 32–33

and interpretation, which included such happy characterisations of Dr. Holmes himself as the following: "He is like a man who has three or four estates of land lying out of sight of each other, and none but his friends take cognizance of the vastness of his possessions. Or his merits are as stars in different constellations, which no telescope can bring into one field of vision." Naturally Dr. Holmes was pleased with the review, and expressed his pleasure in a letter. To this Mr. Bancroft made reply in a communication which has so much of biographical and other interest that it must be printed entire:

To Oliver Wendell Holmes.

"Washington, D. C., 19 *January*, 1885.

"Your letter of the 16th delights me. We are one in our affection for our friend Emerson, and in care for his memory. I first knew him when he was still a minister and came to preach at Northampton. He took for his text: 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,' and explained that Christ the representative of the eternal moral law and justice was already and always on his judgment seat, holding a continuous open court, and bringing every man before his tribunal.

"From that time I have stood with him in close relations of friendship. I have sometimes been at his house; he oftener a guest at mine. In London I had a chance to make him acquainted with very many of the best men and much of the best society of England; he was

once with you my guest at New York. When his house was burned down in his absence abroad, I was one of the contributors to the fund then raised for rebuilding it and for other purposes, which he acknowledged in his own best way.[1] Again we were together at Cairo in Egypt, where I secured him the chance of seeing the wonderful collections of its Museum with Mariette Bey himself as our guide and instructor. After our return to America he spent some days with us at Newport, Rhode Island, where his heart was as open to me as the air; and his mind showed no decay but in a difficulty in the recall of words and names. I do not believe that there is any one with whom he talked so familiarly and with such perfect frankness as with me, perhaps because there was a wider extent of topics and of persons with whom we were both conversant. Moreover, my wife and the second wife of Emerson were both of Plymouth, school girl companions in childhood; and in youth joint enthusiasts in the pursuit of all that is most beautiful in literature, and in later times, Mrs. E. was her friend and mine, visiting us at Newport.

"As for myself, you who are skilled beyond all others among us in the mysteries of biology, know how terrible must be the weight of eighty-four years. Yet old age brings with it tranquillity; I never fret myself because there are evil doers. My venerable friend Judge John Davis of Boston used to say: 'Old age is like sitting under the trees of the garden in early winter; the bloom and verdure of summer are gone; but by their departure it becomes easier to see the stars.'

[1] See pp. 261–262.

"On one of the days in which I wrote my little tribute to your Life of Emerson, I was yet strong enough to rise in the night, light my own fire and candles, and labour with close application fully fourteen hours consecutively, that is, from five in the morning till eight in the evening, with but one short hour's interruption for breakfast; and otherwise no repast: not so much as a sip of water.

"My power of endurance I owe partly to my constitution and partly to the treatment I had as a child. My father suffered me to go out in all weather; to play in the snow; to meet the extremest cold with scanty preparation for it; to play abroad in the summer's pouring rain as well as in sunshine; and in the late summer and autumn to devour all the fruit I could honestly come by. In the culture of mind I owe infinitely more to my father. He never taught his children to believe anything on authority, not even to accept his own religious opinions without first searching to learn the grounds for accepting them as right. And then his lesson was, that intelligence is better than wealth, that the great end was *vitam impendere vero*, to search for the truth with a mind wholly free from bias. A constant clause in his morning family prayer was: 'Give us a teachable temper,' which is just the gift of which we students of biology and history have the most need.

"Following the old fashioned division, I am of the bilious-melancholic-nervous temperament, with not a bit of that sanguine temperament which was the chief element in Prescott's nature. Of the melancholic I

have just enough to keep me steady in my purposes and my affections; and from the nervous, a frame so sensitive as to be quickly aroused and so strong as to know nothing of fear. 'Where even scales do arbitrate the event, My mind inclines to hope,' even now at four score. I have never had a headache in my life that a half hour with a friend or a ride on horseback would not cure, and up to this day I do not know the sensation of acute pain, unless perhaps from the pulling of a tooth.

"My mother was a woman who excelled for largeness of heart; if she saw want it was a necessity to her to relieve it; a woman of feeling not of metaphysics, she had an inimitable power of narration, and a quick sprightliness of manner and mind to the last day of her life. Her hair was abundant and black and, dying between seventy and eighty, every single hair was still as black as the wing of a raven; not one gray one on her head; not one that was beginning to turn gray. But full as she was of vivacity, and loving me with an intensity of affection, she could, from the excessive burden of her household affairs, give little of her time to me the eighth of her thirteen children. I left home for Exeter in my eleventh year, and as it were never to return to my father's house except in vacations, having been a rover all my life.

"Your father I knew, and sat under his preaching for a part of my freshman year; and remember his sermons, especially one to prove the truth of the prophecy that the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh do come. On my return from Europe I had the pleas-

ure to meet your sister whose genius and attractions I remember to this day. As for you, live long and happily; and long after I step on the shore of eternity remember your faithful friend,

"Geo. Bancroft."

The reader of this letter must be struck especially with the record of a day's work upon the Emerson review. It did not escape Dr. Holmes himself, who in the course of acknowledging the letter wrote: "It humbles me by giving me a glimpse of your immense capacity for stern labour and forcing me to contrast it with my own limited power of working and scanty product. I cannot conceive of toiling fourteen hours at a stretch,—I do not believe I ever worked seven hours at a time without intermission. You must be made of iron and vulcanised india-rubber, or some such compound of resistance and elasticity."

The devotion to method which played so important a part in Bancroft's extraordinary capacity for work, has many illustrations in the diaries and letter-files. We find him, for example, periodically noting the day and hour at which his watch has been set, and writing one autumn, after his return to Washington: "My watch has been set Feb. 10; in eight months and fourteen days it had lost 4 minutes, less than a ½ minute a month." Under the letter *S* in the letter-file for 1878, the year in which he was thrown from his carriage, there is entered a sheet at the head of which appears the word, "Sympathy." Under it is written, in his secretary's hand, "Letters of sympathy received by

Mr. Bancroft since Oct. 1st, '78," and ten letters between October 2 and 5 are carefully noted. Birthdays, his own and those of many kinsmen and friends, were carefully remembered and observed. One summer the conditions of the Newport beaches for riding were a matter of daily record. There are many entries of early waking and rising for work; thus (September 22, 1883): "Waked early, at 4. Went to work till 7.30. Did an extra amount of work and satisfactorily." The buoyant note of an entry during the Berlin days—"Woke very early, yet was perfectly well; woke more from excess of health"—does not occur so frequently towards the end; yet enthusiasm, courage and perpetual method were sturdy survivors.

Thus for many years the circumstances of Mr. Bancroft's life suffered no outward change. On March 15, 1886, Mrs. Bancroft died, in her eighty-third year. Her health, never so strong as his, had been the subject of frequent solicitude since the return from Germany. The close companionship of forty-eight years, the unity of interests, personal, social and intellectual, could not come to an end without calling upon the survivor for all that he could command of fortitude and philosophy. To the task of readjustment Mr. Bancroft resolutely set himself, and with the daughter of his son George until her marriage, and then with the family of his son John to make his household, he set about the fulfilment of his remaining years. On the July 1 following Mrs. Bancroft's death, he wrote in his diary: "N. B. I find I am growing very old, and must begin to take farewell of the world." Yet some

of the work already touched upon was still to be done, with more beyond it. And there were friends, many friends, to bring and receive the pleasures of social relationships, the interchange of which was still a delight to him.

One of the good friends of these days, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, has recalled a pleasant episode of the autumn after the death of Mrs. Bancroft. When Mr. Bancroft's birthday, October 3, was approaching he proposed to give up his usual birthday dinner. Mrs. Astor insisted that he should dine at her table, and with Dr. Mitchell planned a surprise for their old friend. Dr. Mitchell said that he would contribute a Madeira of exactly Mr. Bancroft's age. Mrs. Mitchell was to give a decanter of Revolutionary days, and Mrs. Astor a silver coaster. There were about twenty guests, and after dinner Dr. Mitchell rose, spoke of the occasion for the dinner, and read the graceful verses which are printed below. Each guest received a copy, and one of them, ignorant that the lines had been promised to the *Century*, permitted them to reach the Boston *Transcript*, where they appeared anonymously. When the authorship was properly ascribed in one of the newspapers in which they were copied, Dr. S. Austin Allibone sent a clipping of them to Mr. Bancroft, "with the earnest request," as he said, "that you will transmit them to your prospective biographer with directions that he should include them in one of the last chapters of that book—for which we can afford to wait." Even without so clear a mandate from the past, they would surely have been used in this place:

A Decanter of Madeira, aged 86, to George Bancroft, aged 86, Greeting:[1]

October 3, 1886. Newport.

BEAULIEU.

Good Master, you and I were born
In "Teacup days" of hoop and hood,
And when the silver cue hung down,
And toasts were drunk, and wine was good;

When kin of mine (a jolly brood)
From sideboards looked, and knew full well
What courage they had given the beau,
How generous made the blushing belle.

Ah me! what gossip could I prate
Of days when doors were locked at dinners!
Believe me, I have kissed the lips
Of many pretty saints—or sinners.

Lip service have I done, alack!
I don't repent, but come what may,
What ready lips, sir, I have kissed,
Be sure at least I shall not say.

Two honest gentlemen are we,—
I Demi John, whole George are you;
When Nature grew us one in years
She meant to make a generous brew.

She bade me store for festal hours
The sun our south side vineyard knew;
To sterner tasks she set your life,
To statesman, writer, scholar, grew.

[1]See *A Masque, and Other Poems.* By S. Weir Mitchell, p. 61.

Years eighty-six have come and gone;
At last we meet. Your health to-night.
Take from this board of friendly hearts
The memory of a proud delight.

The days that went have made you wise,
There's wisdom in my rare bouquet.
I'm rather paler than I was;
And on my soul, you're growing gray.

I like to think, when Toper Time
Has drained the last of me and you,
Some here shall say, They both were good,—
The wine we drank, the man we knew.

For the birthday celebration of the next year a friend both of Bancroft and of Robert Browning sent by cable from London a quatrain unmistakably by Browning himself. The thriftiness of poets has seldom been better shown than in Browning's note to the common friend: "I chose a short metre with a view to saving your charges for the cable despatch!" This was the greeting:

October 3. Bancroft's Birthday

Bancroft, the message-bearing wire
Which flashes my "All Hail" today
Moves slowlier than the heart's desire
That, what hand pens, tongue's self might say.
—Robert Browning.

The blessings of friendship were evidently an unfailing solace to Mr. Bancroft as the end drew near. It is natural to ask upon what inward springs of faith he

could draw for refreshment. One cannot read his writings without recognising the strength of his belief in the divine guidance of human affairs. Upon his own relations to the outward expressions of religion, the testimony is somewhat conflicting. It has already been seen that as early as 1854[1] his beliefs could hardly be reconciled with those of the Unitarian branch of New England Congregationalism in which he was reared. It is related that in Washington Mrs. Bancroft took a pew in All Souls' (Unitarian) Church, and that when her husband visited it and found her name on the silver plate at its entrance, he had his own substituted.[2] When he received notice in 1888 of his election to the Unitarian Club of Boston, he wrote in reply: "I pray you not to include me in the club which you are forming. I was brought up a Congregationalist, and am not willing at this time of life to adopt any other name." To the minister of the Unitarian Church in which he paid for but rarely occupied the pew to which allusion has been made, he once declared: "I am *not* an Episcopalian! I am a Congregationalist!" and repeated "I am *not* an Episcopalian!" Yet it was his habit at Christmas and Easter to attend St. John's Church in Washington, sitting well forward, but not partaking of the communion. All this, however, savours much more of definition than of essence, besides being based upon the statements of others. In 1887 Dr. Allibone sent him a pamphlet presenting one hundred reasons for believing the divinity of Christ, and Mr.

[1] See p. 120.

[2] See *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings*, 1891, p. 252.

Bancroft's note acknowledging the gift may be taken as the final statement of his opinions:

To S. Austin Allibone.

"Newport, R. I., *August 29th*, 1887.

"*My dear good Friend Allibone:* I have received and set a high value upon the one hundred arguments and more which you were good enough to send me, re-respecting a question which, whether it be considered a question in divinity or philosophy, is the most important that could be raised. I say in reply, nothing can be faultlessly and perfectly well done except by a power which is faultless and perfect. Either the redemption of the human race is very imperfect and partakes of the imperfections of its own nature; or the redeeming power is the power of an infinity that is free from imperfection. Here you have my creed, and I hope it is yours.

"Man is either not redeemed at all; or imperfectly redeemed; or perfectly redeemed: if nothing has been done for him, he is not redeemed at all; if it has been done by a power that is half perfection and half imperfection, then the work has been imperfectly done; but as it is the faultlessly divine which works out his redemption, the work of redemption is perfectly well done, faultless, infinitely good. This is my philosophy and my theology.

"With unchanged regard, yours

"Geo. Bancroft."

But the final pages of the biography of George Ban-

croft must concern themselves with the work of his lifetime, not with theology. When his eighty-seventh year was half gone he was still capable of planning important labours, which the following passage from a letter will explain:

To J. George Harris.

"Washington, D. C., *April* 8, 1887.

"If I feel well enough, I mean to run down, before many days, and see you all at Nashville. I want to do something for the memory of our friend James K. Polk. I think Mrs. Polk should not permit the papers of Mr. Polk to go out of her constant care for a moment; but I thought she might possibly allow me to take some of them to Washington with me and have them immediately copied and the originals returned to her. Speak with her about that, and tell me how she receives the suggestion. I propose to draw his character and especially the results of his administration; a full and just statement of them is of great interest for the whole nation, and you and I understand these things better than any others now alive. . . ."

Before April was over, the journey to Nashville had been made. The notes upon it record the activities of a man who might well have been in his prime. Besides matching his strength with all the attentions of hospitable Southerners entertaining a distinguished guest, he visited Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, Chattanooga and Lookout Mountain. The special object of

the visit was achieved in seeing Mrs. Polk, and arranging for the use of her husband's papers. These were soon sent to him in Washington, and there and in Newport he busied himself for several months with examining and having them copied. The impression which the examination left upon his mind has already been cited.[1] The transcriptions from the papers formed a part of Mr. Bancroft's collections, now in the Lenox Library.

The work upon the Polk papers occupied many hours of the few years that still remained. But it was too late for plan and performance to maintain their ancient balance. The infirmities of age affecting at times the physical and again the mental faculties, broke in upon the regularity of work which had been the rule from boyhood on. As a consequence there is pathetically little to show for all the zeal with which this latest enterprise was undertaken. The copied papers of Polk remain, and the article on Polk in *Appleton's Cyclopædia of American Biography* had the benefit, in 1888, of corrections and additions at Mr. Bancroft's hand.

One letter of 1887 remains to be quoted, not only for the intrinsic interest of its view of Andrew Johnson, but as an evidence of the mental vigour which Mr. Bancroft at his best, kept until the last:

To ADAM BADEAU.

"*December* 9, 1887.

"I thank you very much for the copy of *Grant in Peace* which you have been so good as to send me with

[1] See I., p. 294.

your inscription. The book is to me most interesting; and I like your moderation. In some of the periods of which you treat, I was familiar with men who bore principal parts in public life, and from day to day knew well their private views and purposes.

"I knew Andrew Johnson thoroughly well; having once lived near him, where I saw him every day and had the most unreserved intercourse with him. I then held and now hold that his arraignment was an act of injustice, and that he was on his trial thoroughly entitled to acquittal. The man had faults enough, ambition enough; but his unvaried intention was, to maintain fidelity to the Constitution and keep within its bounds. The confusion grew out of the fact that he wanted to be elected President, and yet, although he wielded the highest executive authority, he had no party disposed to support him for that place; but I do not remember any case where he overstepped the Constitution; and I then thought and still think him more sinned against than sinning. I was in Germany at the time of his arraignment and trial. It excited an interest in the public men of Prussia and those of their fairest-minded and ablest statesmen gave personal attention enough to the question to form upon it an opinion of their own; and they were not able to see any sufficient reason for the arraignment of Andrew Johnson. For myself, I was of that opinion then, and remain of it, having formed it not lightly.

"If your book is as interesting to others as the little in it I have as yet found time to read has been to me, it will make its way very widely.

"I am almost always at home in the evening, and if you incline to give me a friendly call at that time, I shall be very glad to see you."

Although nothing came of the projected history of Polk's administration, Mr. Bancroft was even yet to publish another volume, on the first President who appointed him to public office. In 1889 appeared *Martin Van Buren to the End of His Public Career.* From the Preface, dated September 2, 1889, it appears that it was written many years before, seen by Van Buren himself, and pronounced by him authentic and true. "At the time of its preparation," the Preface ends, "the public mind was grievously agitated by party divisions on public affairs, and on public men; the manuscript was, therefore, put aside for publication in times more favourable to a fairness of judgment on the character and career of Van Buren. In my recent revision of the original manuscript I have made no change that could affect Van Buren's approval of it as thoroughly correct." The book is of less importance, in the record of Mr. Bancroft's own life, as an addition to his historical writings than as a token of his inveterate habit of turning to account every opportunity for industry that lay within his reach.

After the appearance of this volume but a little more than a year of life remained. On the evening of the last December Sunday of 1890, Senator Hoar called upon him in his library and found him at first ready with excellent talk of present and former times. "It was not an old man's memory of the past," Mr. Hoar

has written, "but the fresh and vigorous thought on new topics which were suggested to him in conversation. I think he exhibited a quickness and vigour of thought and intelligence and spoke with a beauty of diction that no man I know could have surpassed." But before the short visit ended, the memory clouded and the grasp relaxed.[1] It needed some stimulus from without, as Mr. Bancroft's son subsequently told Mr. Hoar, to rouse him from a feebleness which was growing habitual. After all, the teeth of Time remain unbroken, and even perennial youth must yield at last to his attempts. On the evening of Mr. Hoar's visit the first quarter of George Bancroft's ninety-first year was already nearly gone; and the second was just begun when he died, at 3:40 o'clock P. M. of Saturday, January 17, 1891.

The national government had long recognised in Mr. Bancroft a national personage. Only for such an one could President Harrison have issued his executive order of January 19: "As an expression of the public loss and sorrow, the flags of all the executive departments at Washington and of the public buildings in the cities through which the funeral party is to pass will be placed at half-mast on tomorrow and until the body of this eminent statesman, scholar and historian shall finally rest in the State that gave him to his country and the world."

Mr. Spofford's manuscript Reminiscences end with this record: "The funeral rites were celebrated with great simplicity, at St. John's Church. Rev. Dr.

[1] See *Autobiography of Seventy Years*, by G. F. Hoar, II, 205–206.

Douglass, the rector, read the service. There was no address. The honorary pall-bearers were Chief Justice Fuller, Justices Field and Blatchford, Senators Evarts and Bayard, Admiral Rodgers, George W. Curtis and John A. King of New York, Samuel P. Langley and Ainsworth R. Spofford. In the audience were President Harrison, Vice-President Morton, Count D'Arco Valley, (the Minister of Germany), James G. Blaine, General Schofield, Senator Hoar, Civil Service Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt, and many citizens."

On the following day, January 21, the body of George Bancroft was buried at the Rural Cemetery in Worcester, Massachusetts.

X

CONCLUSIONS

THE reader who has followed Mr. Bancroft through these annals of his more than ninety crowded years must have reached certain conclusions of his own about the personal qualities of the man and the scope and value of his work. In Mr. Bancroft's records of himself the premises for such conclusions have been presented. Yet much of the record remains unprinted; and after examining it all and considering Mr. Bancroft's published writings more closely than the majority of readers at this day can be expected to have done, the biographer himself has a few words to add.

"If the style be anywhere the man," Sir William Stirling-Maxwell once wrote, "it must be in historical writing. No man can describe the doings of men without unfolding the qualities of his judgment and the tendency of his sympathies. . . . That fragment of his own time which an author exhibits in himself is often to his reader, as it certainly was to himself, the most valuable portion of his salvage from a submerged and vanished world."[1] The bond between the life and the work of a writer is peculiarly intimate in the case, like

[1] See *Miscellaneous Essays and Addresses*, pp. 278, 279.

Bancroft's, of a man with positive theories of human relationships, with opportunities to express them through political action, and with a lifetime of authorship in which to place them upon permanent record. The study of the relation between Bancroft and his books yields no surprises; it is not the unexpected which happens; the man and his productions stand as clearly related as cause and effect in the working out of an established physical law. If one knew nothing of the man, the books would reveal him; if the books were unknown, a study of the man would produce a distinct image of the kind of historical writing he must do.

From his own unconscious testimony, and from the testimony of his contemporaries, the outlines of the man show clear. He stands forth enthusiastic, confident, exacting—equally of himself and of others; formal, slenderly endowed with humour and that sense of it which is the best armour against self-deception; a man of books before he took his place among men, and therefore, though modified and rounded by human contacts, essentially a man of books to the last; a democrat, philosophical rather than practical; a Puritan affected for life by the influences which accounted for the whole phenomenon of New England Transcendentalism; above all the embodiment of an intelligence, keen, broad, and unwearying in the pursuit of titanic labours.

When we turn from the man to his books—for by them more than by any of his work in politics and statesmanship must his achievement now be measured—two considerations are to be kept clearly in view: the age

of which he was a product, and the precise nature of the task he set himself. Though the nineteenth century was nearly finished when Bancroft's work was done, he was conspicuously a man of the first half of that century, still controlled by many of the formal influences of the century which had gone before it. And it was not the work of a post-Darwinian "scientific historian" which he undertook, not a succinct, however comprehensive, narrative of events; but rather an interpretive rendering of them in the terms of his accepted philosophy.

The time when Bancroft began his work, and set the key which was but slightly lowered, not definitely changed, by the passage of years, was a time more distant from our own than the mere subtraction of one date from another would imply. In 1830 the American Revolution lay in a past only six years more remote than our Civil War is at the present (1908). The new American consciousness of nationality, the democratic idea shiningly incarnated in Andrew Jackson, the triumphs of the popular will typified in the disintegration of Federalism—all these influences charged the very air. For a theorist of radical tendencies, for such a theorist as Bancroft's nature and training inevitably made him, they were influences potent of appeal and effect. And if they evoked from Bancroft a response which determined the enthusiastic, sometimes rhapsodic quality of his historical labours, they also ensured an audience in sympathy with his point of view. Let his time, then, be remembered, and let him be considered as a somewhat radical representative of one of its phases.

The definition of his task as the production of an "epic of liberty" is perhaps as suggestive as any that can be given. The belief, to which his public speeches gave perpetual expression, that government of, for and by the people is preëminently the best, that true wisdom in the conduct of human affairs springs not from the few but from the many, is the belief which formed the very warp and woof of his writing. He was even persuaded that this typically American belief made him write the more impartially: "Between Britain," he said, "and the new empire which she founded, the duty of impartiality belongs equally to the men of the two countries; but experience has shown that it is practised with more difficulty by those of the parent land. . . . The tone of our writers has often been deferentially forbearing; those of our countrymen who have written most fully of the war of our revolution, brought to their task no prejudices against England, and while they gladly recall the relations of kindred, no one of them has written a line with gall."[1] There can be little question that he earnestly believed both the candour of his judgments and the ultimate value of his work to be enhanced by its openly democratic bias. "The historian like the judge," he declared, "must be superior to prepossession and to pride of opinion."[2] To both these superiorities Bancroft himself would have laid confident claim, untroubled by a doubt that the validity of the claim might suffer through his very loyalty to the professions of a democrat. Yet we have seen Ranke qualifying his

[1] See *History of the United States,* Vol. VIII, pp. 121, 122.
[2] See p. 299.

praise of Bancroft's history as the best book ever written from the democratic point of view—a qualification which Bancroft did not entirely relish;[1] and the consensus of later historical judgment lays special emphasis upon Ranke's implied objection, not so much, I should say, because the bias was democratic, as because a leaning so pronounced as Bancroft's endangers the equilibrium of any historical writer.

Another article of Bancroft's historical creed was clearly stated in one of the letters printed in this book: "Each page of history may begin and end with Great is God and marvellous are his doings among the children of men; and I defy a man to penetrate the secrets and laws of events without something of faith. He may look on and see as it were the twinkling of stars and planets and measure their distances and motions; but the life of history will escape from him. He may pile a heap of stones, he will not get at the soul."[2] This belief he held as no mere private feeling, but as a basic working principle; and joining it with his faith in democracy, he could not but see and demonstrate the hand of God in every token of popular progress. To whatever degree, then, one may sympathise with Bancroft in these beliefs, it must be remembered that he wrote as one with a definite thesis to propose and maintain.

With that understanding of the nature of his task let us look at the methods pursued in working it out. Into these the personal equation and what may be called the temporal equation vitally entered. Especially in the free use of his materials must he be judged according

[1] See p. 183. [2] See p. 77.

to the standards of his day. It was a day in which quotation marks were not the sacred enclosures they have become. We do not now make transfers from a page of manuscript or print to a page of our own without assurance that every word and comma are present or accounted for. So reputable a scholar as Jared Sparks could edit the correspondence of Washington into conformity with his own ideas of verbal decorum, and commit an offence much less heinous than it would appear in our own meticulous time. To a certain extent the standards of the classics still held sway: if Thucydides could present much of his narrative in the form of imaginary public speeches, why must all latitude be denied the modern historian? Bancroft does not appear to have invented public utterances by historic characters, but he did not scruple to compile from separate reports and offer as continuous deliverances the speeches ascribed to Pitt, Conway, Grenville and Mansfield in the Parliament of 1766. This method was implicitly acknowledged in the foot-notes of his fifth volume,[1] and when, in the later revisions, the foot-notes disappeared the record of the method disappeared with them.[2]

[1] See *History of the United States*, Vol. V, pp. 384–416.

[2] A trifling matter, yet significant, is related to the very bindings of his volumes as they were first published. On their backs will be found a decorative emblem showing an eagle on top of the globe, both surrounded by the words, "Westward the Star of Empire takes its way." When about half the volumes were issued Edward Everett called Bancroft's attention to the fact that Bishop Berkeley's line referred not to the "star" but to the "course" of empire; yet "star" it remained on all the succeeding volumes, even the *History of the Formation of the Constitution.*

There is even no occasion, or ground, for denying such charges as were brought against Bancroft in an article in *The Nation*[1] immediately after his death. "When he quotes a contemporary document or letter," said the critic, "it is impossible to tell without careful verifying, whether what he gives us between the quotation marks is precisely what should be there, or whether it is a compilation, rearrangement, selection, or even a series of mere paraphrases of his own." As an example, Bancroft's rendering of a letter from Massachusetts to Charles II is cited, and if one will take the trouble to make the challenged comparison between the letter on Bancroft's pages and in the Records of Massachusetts, the force of the charge must be fully admitted. Nor can one deny the further charge that such practices are peculiarly misleading in the work of one who dealt so largely as Bancroft in manuscript materials. It is a reasonable objection, also, to Bancroft's methods that he placed upon his manuscript sources a value out of proportion to the value of records previously printed. For one whose idea of his undertaking cost him the pains incurred by Bancroft in the accumulation of unpublished papers, it would have been more than human to hold them in any esteem but the highest. Admit the worst, that at times, with his immediate ends in view, he made such uses of his manuscript materials as to impair their value to future students; yet remember always that he collected these materials with a thoroughness and an appreciation of their worth which the most modern of historians can hardly surpass, and that his

[1] By Col. T. W. Higginson. See *The Nation*, Jan. 22, 1891.

pioneer-work in this direction has been of untold benefit, actual and suggestive, to many who have come after him.

The truth is that for Bancroft and most of his contemporaries history was not yet divorced from literature. We have seen even how closely the poet and the historian were related in his eyes;[1] and for the historian with anything of the poet in his composition, the spirit must of course transcend the letter. The glory of the literary, philosophical history is one, and the glory of the scientific history is another. You may like the one, or you may like the other; but it is quite unfair to complain of the one because it is not the other. To write an "epic of liberty," one must be not only democratic, but epical; and Bancroft—treating in the heroic manner a theme of heroic mould—was both. To convey the spirit of the events which produced the United States was his paramount aim. This purpose may well have been his own justification for the freest use of materials. To this end also he gave the fullest expression of his personality in a strongly individual style.

A chapter, if not a page, by Bancroft is indeed almost as clearly recognisable as a corresponding passage by Gibbon or Macaulay. This is but to say that it was obviously his own. Though many single pages are stamped with his unmistakable seal, it is in longer passages that all the characteristics must be sought; for his style had its marked variations according to the nature of the subject under immediate discussion. It

[1] See p. 119.

could never be called anything but formal, yet an instinct for the picturesque in quotation or generalisation often imparted a striking quality to the beginning or ending of a paragraph. A kindred dramatic sense showed him the value, for example, of ending his seventh volume with Bunker Hill, his eighth with the Declaration of Independence. The manner was often excessively florid—a quality which Bancroft himself seems to have recognised in defining his last revision as a task of "slaughtering adjectives." Method and style were equally represented in his wide philosophical digressions on such special topics as slavery, colonisation, European wars and German characteristics. At times the fact that he was writing a history of the United States seems to have suffered burial under the accumulations of knowledge on subjects but distantly related to the central theme. Carlyle had a way of striking nails square on the head, and when he frankly told Bancroft, early in his career, that he was "too didactic, went too much into the origin of things generally known, into the praise of things only partially praisable, only slightly important," and advised him to throw away his spectacles and look with his eye,[1] he warned the historian against the least fortunate tendencies of his writing. The less specifically Bancroft narrated events the more clearly his faults, as we now regard them, of method and manner declared themselves. As a consequence he is more steadily at his best when dealing with battles, campaigns and governmental actions than at any other times; and that best could be uncommonly vivid and

[1] See I., p. 226.

impressive. Both the faults and the merits of the historian—so closely were man and historian related—are precisely those to be expected of the man. By reason both of the personal and of the "temporal" equations he wrote in a fashion from which a reaction was bound to come. If that reaction is now believed to have gone too far, we need only remind ourselves that few standards are final.

Bancroft himself naturally wished his work to be judged in its latest editions. For biographical purposes the earliest are evidently the most important. To compare the last with the first is to receive a concrete illustration of progress. The final revision represents the progress both of the years through which Bancroft lived and of the man himself. There were episodes in his life which justified a doubt whether the Rev. Aaron Bancroft's daily prayer, "Give us a teachable temper," was answered with any special reference to his distinguished son. But the last revision gives proof that in his old age Bancroft was both teachable and taught. Robert C. Winthrop and others who knew him well have borne witness to his diligent search for the truth. That which he found was not invariably the truth upon which all were agreed. Nothing was so dear to him, however, as his historical reputation; and his statement of the truth as he found it was the statement essential to his nature and his conception of the task to which he gave his life. The greatness of that life was primarily an intellectual greatness. Yet the sixty years of victorious labour upon a lofty enterprise could never have been lived without an accompanying great-

ness of character. "I have in my day encountered criticism," he wrote to a friend in the final period of his life, "and have been 'forced to show my passport' at every step in my progress." But when all is said and done, a great fact is manifest: Bancroft's ideal, to produce an historical epic of democracy, was a high and noble ideal, to the realisation of which he brought an intensity of devotion altogether extraordinary. In varied fields he rendered distinguished service to his country and his time. Precisely what posterity shall owe him it is yet too early to say. In the annals of scholarship he stands in the small front rank of those who have made the uttermost of every opportunity that temperament and circumstance could offer. His old age was a growth rather than a declension. The slope was upward to the end.

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Compiled by Henry C. Strippel

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*** Mr. Bancroft delivered the Oration which is printed on pages 9–20.

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(In: Pulpit and Rostrum, Nos. 34 & 35, pp. 1–13. *New York*, June, 1865. 12°.)

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*** Sabin says, 50 copies of this edition were printed, imperial 4to.

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